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2d artist

Concept Art, Digital & Matte Painting Magazine
Issue 055 July 2010

Interview

David Dunstan



Articles

Sketchbook of Jon McCoy



The Gallery

Liam Peters, Adam Bum and
Serge Birault, plus more!



SCIENCE FICTION

MARINES, CITIES & SPACESHIPS

NEW!!! Painting Futuristic Marines

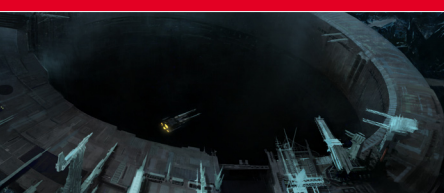
Svetlin Velinov talks us through creating the first character in our brand new series **Painting Futuristic Marines**.

NEW!!! Concept art for Games

Thomas Pringle kicks off our new **Concept art for Games** tutorial by setting the scene for the game with his first of two great environments.

NEW!!! Custom Brushes For Sci-Fi

Jama Jurabaev is back again this month and shows us how to create some **Custom Brushes for Sci-Fi**.





The first new tutorial up this month is a really exciting new series called Concept art for Games. The aim of this series is to show how industry professionals would tackle a games brief in a professional environment. The first two chapters will be handled by the fantastically talented and experienced games artist **Thomas Pringle**. Thomas kicks off the series by creating the first of two environments based on the games brief created by the excellent artists participating in the series.

The second new tutorial series starting this month is Painting Futuristic Marines. In this series we plan to show you how to create original marines that have been designed to survive in different environments. **Svetlin Velinov** kicks off the series by showing us how to create a futuristic marine being attacked by worm creatures. Svetlin also shows us cool technique for adding texture to your marines armour.

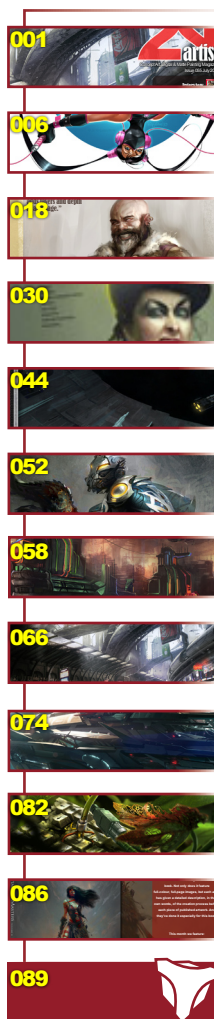
Our third new tutorial this month is Custom Brushes for Sci-Fi. In this series our artists will be showing us how to create custom brushes for different Sci-Fi scenes, and this month will be handled by the excellent **Jama Jurabaev**. Jama shows us how he used custom brushes to create an amazing asteroid field, and has also prepared some videos to show his work flow.

As promised in last month's editorial we have the final chapter of **Chee Ming Wong's** fantastic steampunk tutorial. In his final chapter he completes his tour of his steampunk world by taking us into the heart of the steampunk city.

This month's fantastic Futuristic City and cover image has been made for us by the 2D Artist regular **Ignacio Bazan Lazcano**. Ignacio shares some really useful tips with us including showing us how to create repeatable patterns that disappear into the distance of our Futuristic trade Centre.

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the July issue of 2D Artist. I hope you are all making the most of the hot summer weather. July's issue is full of great tutorials and amazing images with one clear theme Science Fiction. This month is also a special issue as it contains not one, not two, but three new tutorials!



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"Barbarian Chick"

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Our interview this month comes from the fantastically unique **Loopy Dave**. Dave has a great sense of humour and tells us how he makes amazing illustrations using a mouse! This month's sketchbook is by **Jon McCoy**. Jon is an excellent young UK based artist, and he shares some really great sketches with us and shows us some final pieces.

Vinod More is this month's making of artist, and he shows us how he brings plant and machine together to create his excellent image "It's a new world". This issue is really full of some amazing tutorials and artwork and that filters through in to this month's gallery which features great artwork from **Jason Seiler**, **Serge Birault**, **Ioan Dumitrescu** and many other brilliant artists.



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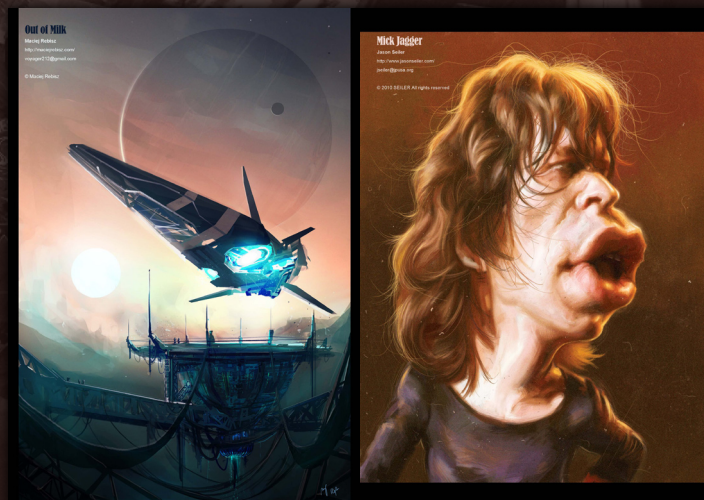
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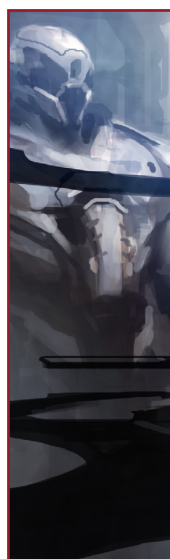
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Contributing Artists

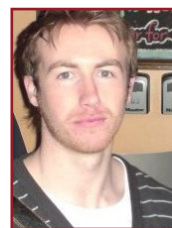
Every month many artists around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them!

If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine, please contact: simon@3dtotal.com



Jon McCoy

Jon McCoy is a 25 year old professional concept artist living and working in the UK. Currently working at Crytek UK, he is developing a brand new IP. He specializes in Character, Environment and Industrial design. He graduated in 2009 from Huddersfield University with a degree in Transport Design.



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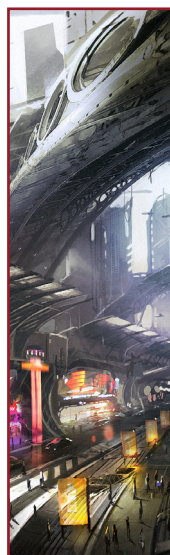
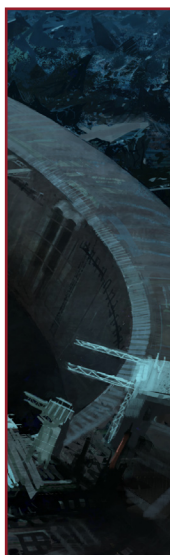


Thomas Pringle

Thomas was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1977.

He received his Masters Degree in illustration from the School of Design in Kolding, Denmark. He has worked on many high profile projects in the game industry. Client list, among others: Blur studio, Digital Extremes, Armature studio, Avalanche studios, Human head studios, THQ and Vectorcell. He currently resides in Ontario, Canada.

<http://www.pringleart.com/>
thomas.pringle@gmail.com



Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

Lives in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires where he's been working for four years in the games industry as an illustrator and concept artist. He currently works for TimeGate Studios where his tasks include developing the aesthetics of the game right from the very beginning – what he'd call, "pre-production". In the future he'd like for Argentina to become well-known for its artistic talent, where he can learn – and teach – amongst the best. <http://www.neisbeis.deviantart.com/>
i.bazanlazcano@gmail.com



Gallery - Days of Victory by Ioan Dumitrescu

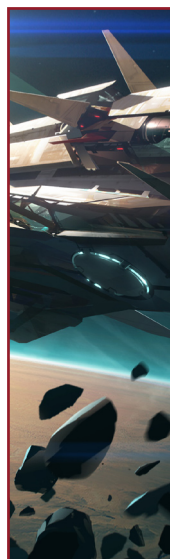


Dr. Chee Ming Wong

Dr. Wong is both a visual imagineer & director of Opus Artz Ltd and has over 10 years of creative visualization and industrial design experience, working with a diverse range of game & animation developers worldwide.

His projects have included The Edge of Twilight, External Enviromental Art Consultant on Bioshock 2 and Senior Concept Artist and Visual Lead for the MMO "Infinity: The Quest For Earth".

<http://www.opusartz.com>
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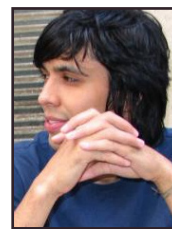


Jama Jurabaev

After Jama's graduation as an aerospace engineer in 2004 he never thought that his life will be related with digital art. But now he is working as a concept artist, and digital art has totally consumed his life.

He has done a lot of illustrations for advertising agencies but now is searching for serious projects in the game or film industry.

<http://jamajurabaev.daportfolio.com/>
jama_art@tag.tj



Vinod More

Vinod More is a bachelor of fine art and has a master's degree in design from the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai. Vinod has 7 years experience in games and films, starting his career as a concept and texturing artist and currently working as lead artist at Pixion Studios, Mumbai, India. Vinod is fascinated and inspired by shades of nature, his core interest lies in creating and playing with lights, shapes, compositions and moods.

vindowart.blogspot.com/ | vindow.vinod@gmail.com



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We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, 'making of' writers, and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: simon@3dtotal.com



Custom Brushes for Sci-Fi - Asteroid Belt, Stars, Star Field, etc. by Jama Jurabaev

“Most of my initial drawings are just me and my imagination, but I will go look at, and work from, life once I want to work the idea up into a finished piece.”



Loopy Dave

Welcome to the world of David Dunstan aka Loopy Dave. Loopy Dave is an illustrator from Australia who has a fascinatingly funny outlook on life. Read on to find out how Loopy Dave uses a mouse to paint, and check out his images which are sure to put a smile on your face.

Interview with Loopy Dave

Hi, thanks for agreeing to be interviewed by 2DArtist. We always start with the obvious question so can you tell us a little about yourself and how you ended up doing digital illustration?

I currently live and work in a small town just outside of Melbourne, Australia. Here, through the magic of the internet, I can create, deal with clients and enjoy the clean country air as well as the occasional pile of horse droppings on the pavement outside the local shops, and the threat of devastating fires in summer.

I studied to be graphic designer and worked as such for a number of years in Melbourne, but in one of those "when life throws you lemons, make lemonade" things, I utilized the contacts I had made in the design world and took up freelance illustration. It turned out to be an easier switch than I thought - as a designer I drew in any spare moment, and as an illustrator I could draw all the time, spare or otherwise!

Painting digitally seemed a natural fit - apart from working in Photoshop for years as a designer and just for fun, clients always preferred artwork in a digital format, so if it wasn't a Photoshop file, I needed to scan it in and make it one anyway.

I have to ask about your name Loopy Dave.

Where did it come from?

I did some work some years back for a company that dealt with more than one David. I rang the office one day and apparently the secretary yelled out that it was David on the phone, to which my friend replied "the normal one or the loopy Dave?" I've been Loopy Dave ever since.

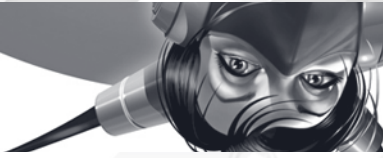
Your work is really unique and you obviously have your own style. Would you say that you were inspired by an artist or group of artists, or that it just sort of happened?

It's funny, but the less I worried about developing a style and just enjoyed my art, the



more I seemed to develop one, even though I have quite diverse interests - I enjoy drawing "simple" cartoon characters as much as I do far more realistic illustrations and every shade in between.

There is no one artist who I would say I've modeled myself on and I'm largely self taught. It's been more a case of soaking up lots of sources, my natural curiosity leading me to try different things and years of constantly drawing



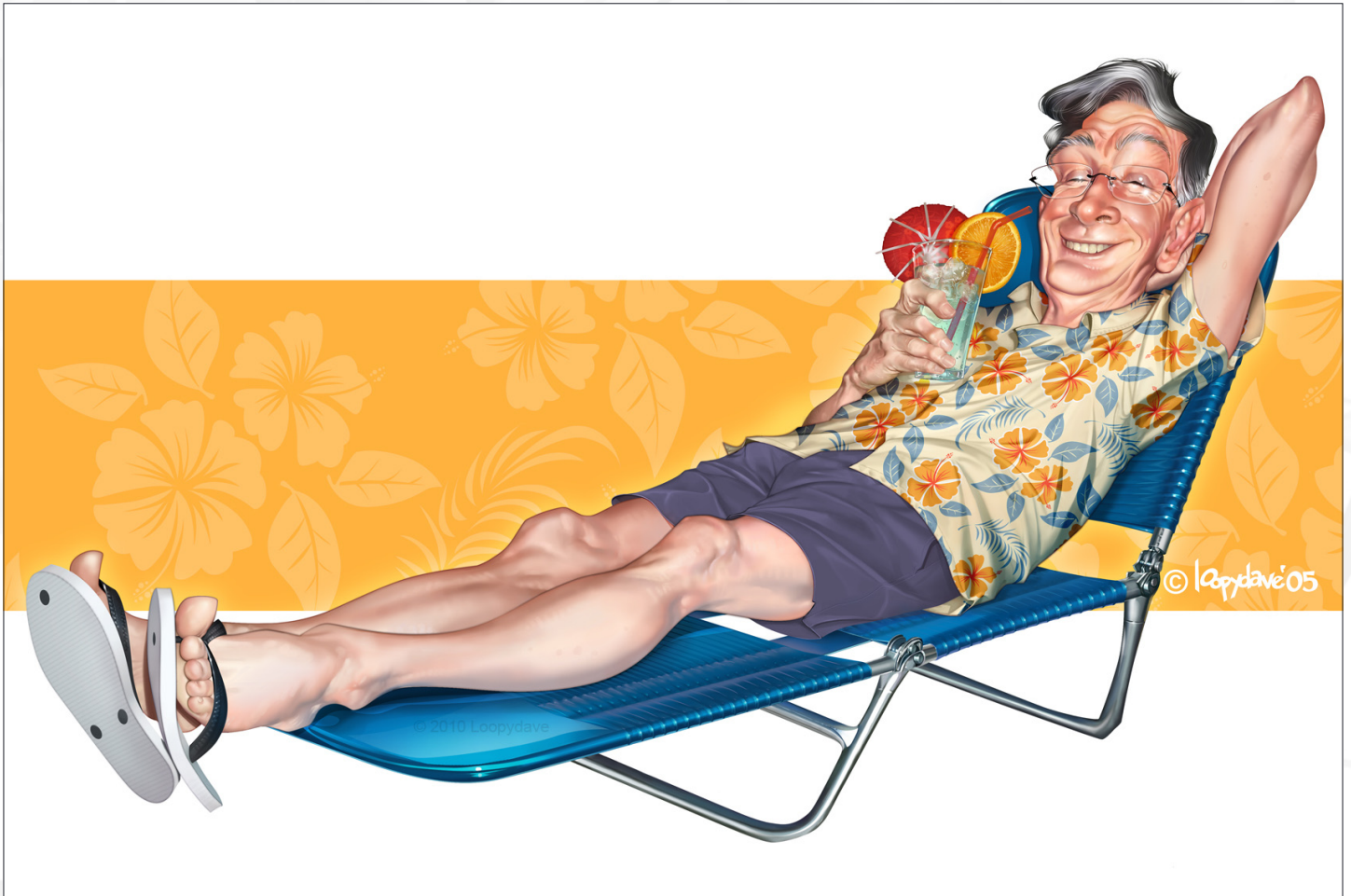
and painting (hardly a day goes by without me drawing, doodling or scribbling something). The people who I admire, inspire, and challenge me is really too long to list, but I idolized many of the great fantasy illustrators growing up - Frazetta, Boris, Jusko, Luis Royo - I love Gil Elvgren, Robert McGinnis, JC Leyendecker, Norman Rockwells' work, though you see less of their "fingerprint" in my work than some lesser known artists, such as Dan Decarlo, Joe Staton, Chris Archilleos, Fastner & Larson etc.

I learnt early on the power of a good narrative in a picture - I would have books and books full of my drawings and no matter how technically competent an illustration was, the pictures people related to most were ones that told an interesting story (or were of someone they knew).

Is it true that you use a mouse to paint rather than a Wacom? If so, why? And does this mean that you sketch out a lot of your work and then scan it in to paint it?

It's true! I played around with a Wacom tablet many years ago, but back then there was an annoying lag between hand action and movement on screen, so I taught myself to paint with a mouse, which I still do today. I sketch out all my work on paper first then scan it in - I love the feeling of drawing pencil on paper, so I don't really see this as a negative at all.

I recently invested in a Wacom 21 Cintiq; it's sitting on my desk waiting for me to connect it up and put it through its paces. It'll probably





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change my process a little, but I can't see it taking over from my good old sketch pad.

Your artwork contains some amazing details; do you spend a lot of time zoomed in on the image?

I've always been a little obsessed with details, even before I moved over to digital painting. I still have sketches of animals from when I was young done with a .1mm technical pen, just so I could get every hair down. I currently have a 30" monitor connected to my laptop and tend to paint my pictures quite large (4000 plus pixels) which gives me a large area to paint in. I also usually have two copies of the same file open in Photoshop - one to see the picture as a whole and another for zooming in and out as I work.

What is your main source of inspiration? Do you get a lot of inspiration by observing the funny things in life?

Yes, my personal work is usually inspired by things that amuse and entertain me or a desire to try to work on some aspect of my artwork - these are not necessarily mutually exclusive! I like to experiment with different looks and feels - it makes life interesting. Fortunately my commercial work often allows me to explore



some level of humor or something of interest, but paying work is clearly about pleasing the client and meeting the deadlines.

You mentioned you currently work as freelance illustrator. What would be your ideal job or project to work on?

I really like variety - it's what I enjoy about working freelance, so I probably can't nail down just one thing as being ideal - though I was really fortunate recently to do a cover

for a *Modesty Blaise* comic/magazine (Agent X-9 - a character I have loved since my teens). Jobs like that come with their own internal pressure though - you really want to do justice to something you have loved for so long.

What was your favorite thing to draw when you were young?

As a kid, I liked to draw just about anything - people, animals, machinery, plants etc., but as I grew a little older I became obsessed with



drawing people's faces. I would draw them in class, on public transport - anywhere I went I would draw the faces I saw around me. I filled



sketchbooks with them, drew them on pages where I was taking notes etc. Some 5-6 years into my professional working life I bought a

car and without the daily commute on public transport I kind of just stopped.



Funny, I was probably better at drawing faces back then than I am today because of the constant practice - I was certainly more confident about it!

A lot of your animals have quite human-like characteristics. If you were to draw yourself as an animal, which animal would it be and what would he be doing?

I used to have a cartoon mouse character I would identify as me - I painted him on the door of my first car (a Suzuki Mightyboy - the world's smallest and surprisingly underpowered Ute).

Seems kind of silly when I think about it - I'm not quiet, small or even a fan of cheese. My friend tells me I'm a lemur - hyperactive, quick and a bit crazy - I think there may be a little *Madagascar* the movie in her thinking though! A lemur juggling a rather surprised rhino, two chickens and a cat should do it I think.



When you sketch do you mainly draw things from life or do you let your imagination run wild? Most of my initial drawings are just me and my imagination, but I will go look at, and work from, life once I want to work the idea up into a finished piece. I did a year of life drawing

classes in college and used to draw everything around me when I was younger, but it's mostly a time issue now - I just don't seem to have the spare time to take a sketch pad to the zoo, out into the hills or stuff like that.

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed by 2DArtist magazine, and sharing your excellent work with us, I am sure it has put a smile on a lot of people's face.

Cheers! Grateful for the interest in my work and taking the time to chat.

David Dunstan

For more work by this artist please visit:

<http://loopydave.com/>

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Interviewed by: Simon Morse





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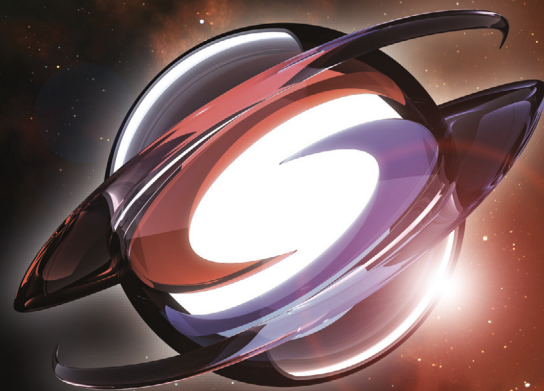
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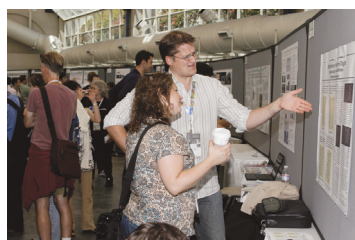
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“One of the basics in environment design is a strong foreground. It adds layers and depth to an image.”



SKETCHBOOK OF JON MOODY

Jon Moody joins us for this month's sketchbook. He shares some of his great character sketches with us, which are drawn from both popular culture and his own expansive imagination. We're sure you'll find the following pages both illuminating and inspiring!

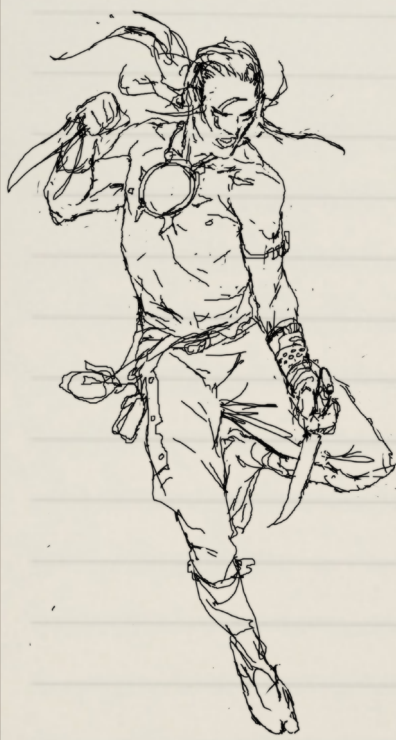


Fig.01a

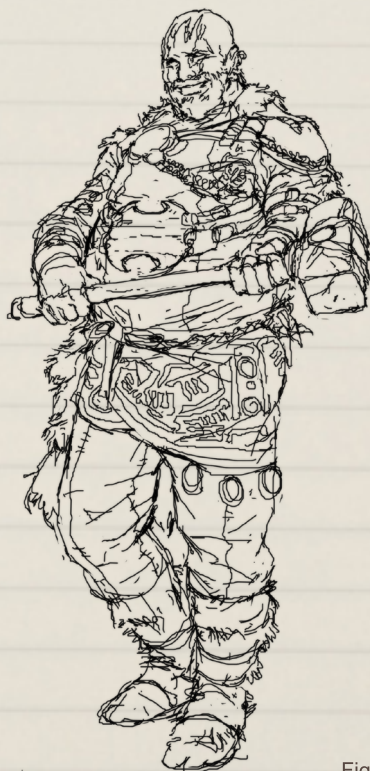


Fig.02a

SKETCHBOOK OF JON MCCOY

This concept was my attempt to redesign of one of my favorite 80's cartoons, *The Visionaries*. This is Feryl, the knight who changes into a wolf. I wanted the art direction to be quite realistic, based on Barbarian and Viking styling (Fig.01a – 01b).

This is Ectar, Feryl's mentor. In this design, I wanted to push a more decorative and ornate character to contrast Feryl's minimal costuming. I also aimed for some strong expression with Ectar (Fig.02a – 02b).

This image was practice at a kind of dark portrait painting. I was aiming to find a good balance between the detail of a drawing and the necessary detail for a painting." (Fig.03a – 03b).



Fig.01b



Fig.02b

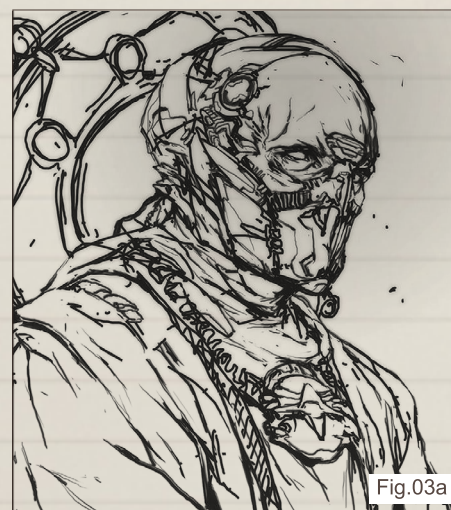


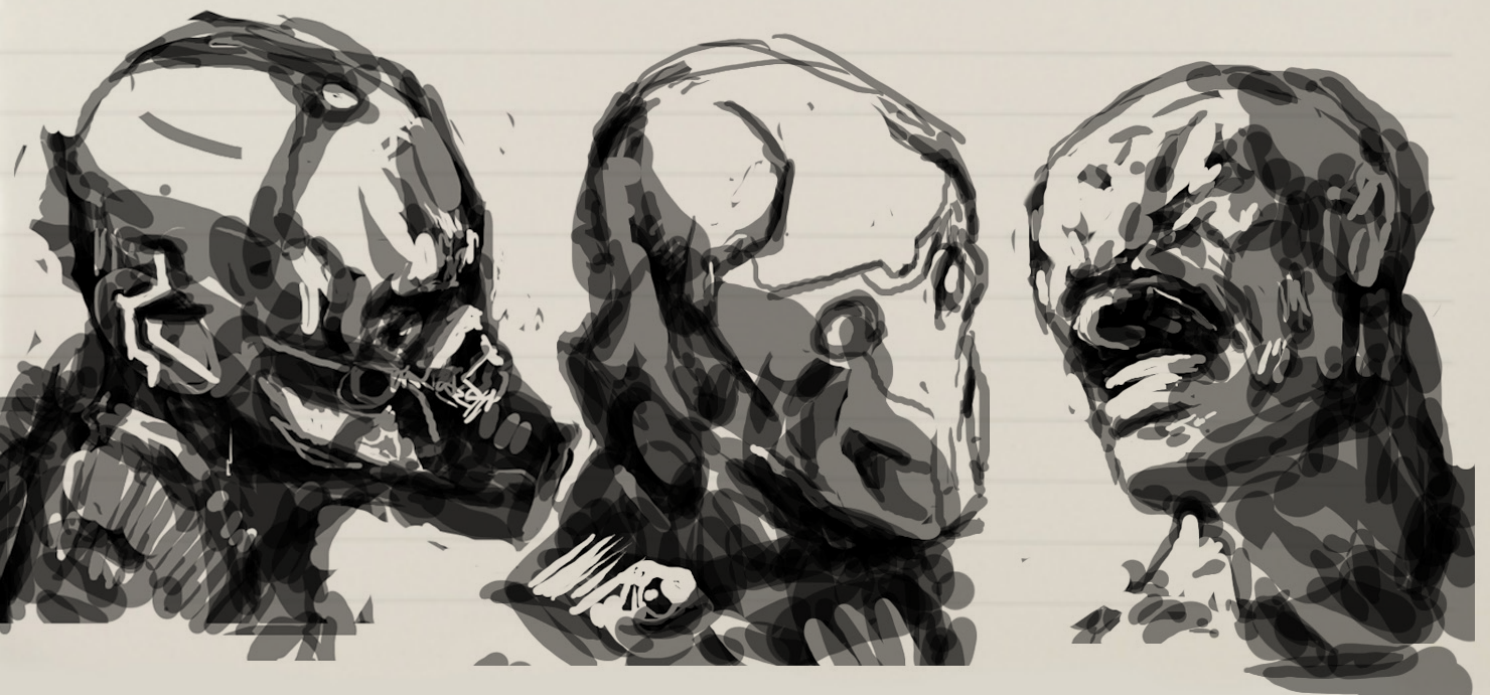
Fig.03a



Fig.03b



In this image I simply set myself the task of scribbling some heads. I was trying a 'blobby' approach to thumbnailing. I used a low opacity brush to layer up the darks to get unplanned shapes (Fig.04).





Similar to the head explorations, I again used a blobby technique to find some interesting ship silhouettes and shape. It's a method that allows a lot of randomness into your designs (**Fig.05**).



Fig.05



Fig.06a



Fig.06b

Here's a clearer example of the same technique, pushed further to a more finished state. It was simply a case of refining over and over, once I'd found an interesting thumbnail (Fig.06a – 06b).

This speed painting was just for fun, practicing how to indicate scale and achieve an epic scale shot. I was also trying to work out how much detail is just enough for a sketchy piece like this (Fig.07).



Fig.07



Fig.08

This sketch was an exercise in colorizing a black and white thumbnail. I tried to only use adjustment layers and painting in the masks (**Fig.08**).

This sketch was really a bit of a re-learn for me. One of the basics in environment design is a strong foreground. It adds layers and depth to an image. And I didn't realize how much I'd neglected it until this sketch (**Fig.09**).



Fig.09



Fig.10

This speed painting started out as something completely different. It started out as a space dock, with a ship landing on it. But I really wanted something a bit odd, so it became a dragon flying down the side of some buildings (Fig.10).

With this environment, I was aiming to achieve a very natural sky and horizon. I really like blue, overcast diffuse lighting, so I avoided a strong direct light like a Sun. I think it also helps in making the structure's lights read stronger (Fig.11).

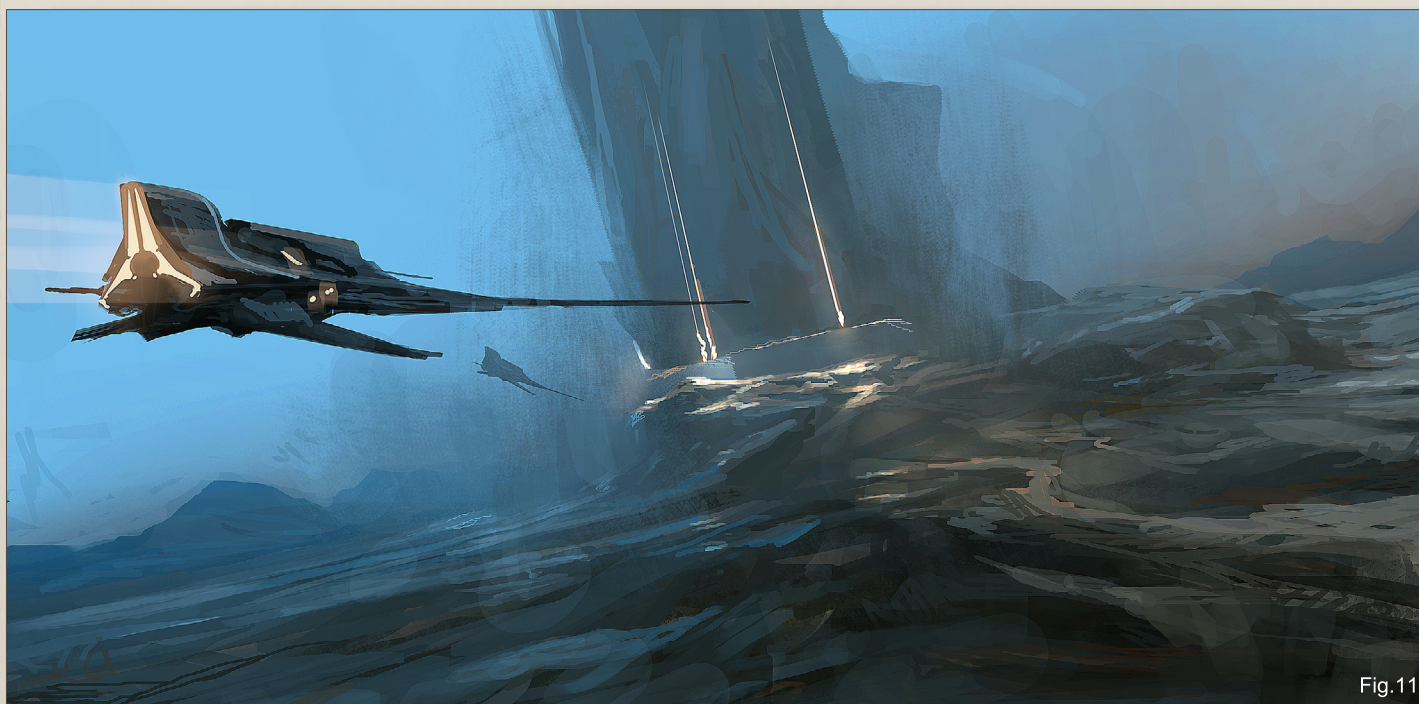


Fig.11



Fig.12

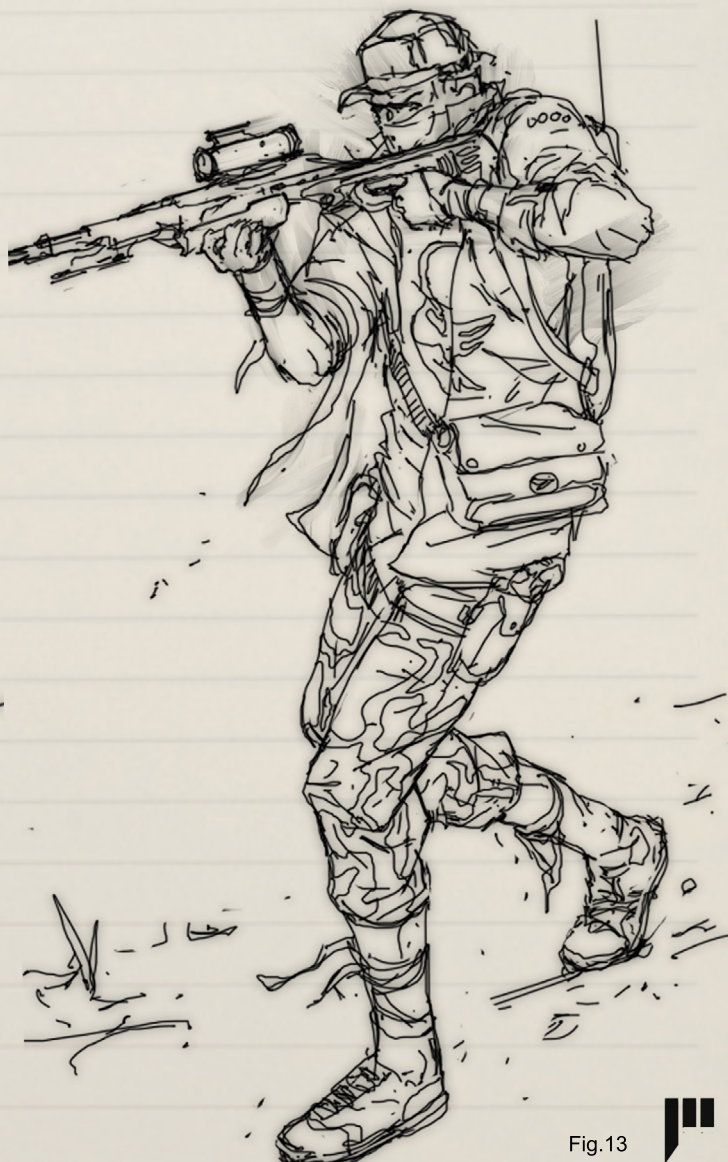


Fig.13

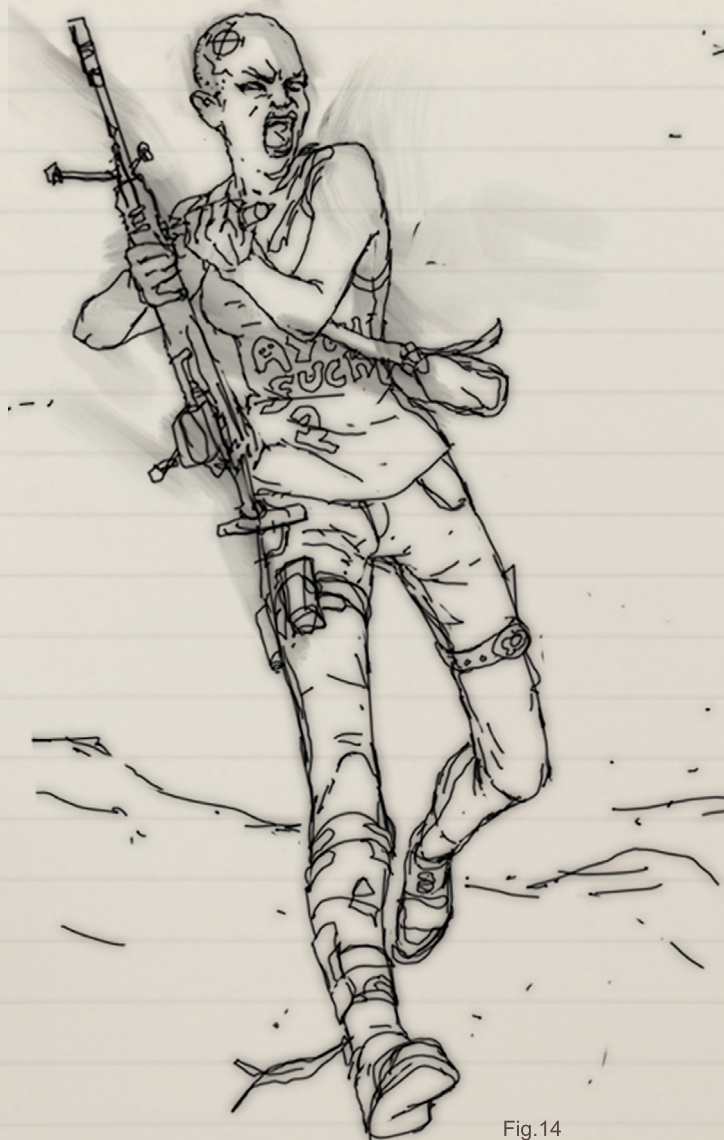


Fig.14

These were attempts at some dynamic poses and gestures. When designing a character I'd usually do this first then design over the top, so that I could (hopefully) describe their character by their pose (Fig.12).

This character was inspired by the Terminator. I wanted to design some human resistance fighters. So it was really important that they didn't just look like mercenaries (Fig.13).

This girl is another human resistance fighter. Again I wanted her to look like she was a civilian before doomsday. So her vest has graphics, she has a shoulder bag and wears jeans (Fig.14).



Fig.15

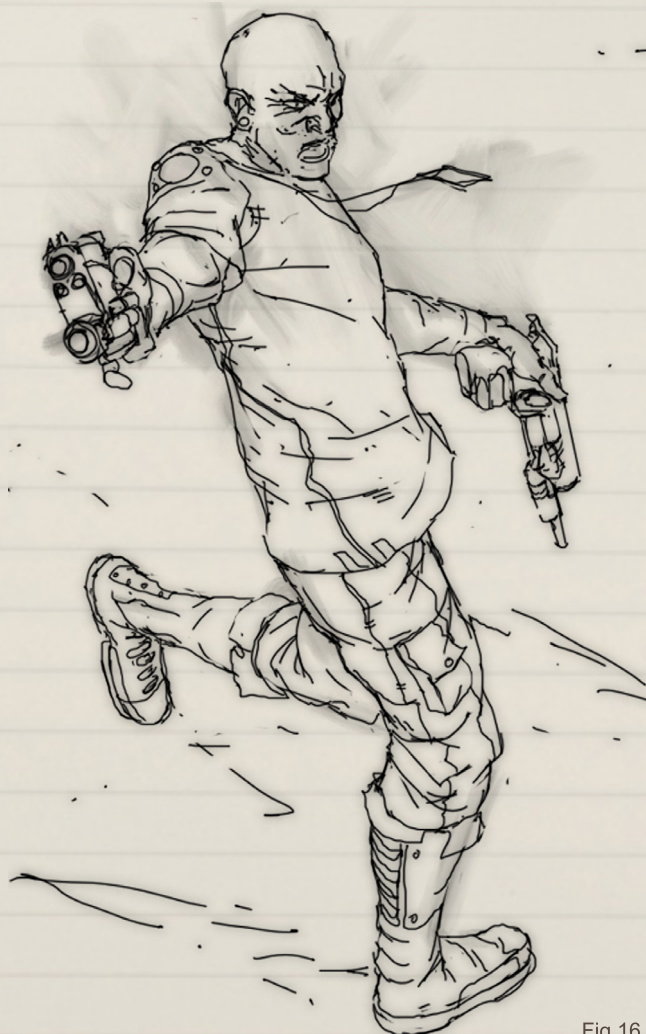


Fig.16



Fig.17

This is supposed to be the original T-101. I was aiming to get a sense of weight in the pose, and the dead expression of a Terminator (Fig.15).

With this character I was trying to make him feel like he was landing from a small jump. I was also practicing drawing characters holding guns (Fig.16).

Recently I've been really interested in fashion photography. So with this image I wanted to design a character that had some abstract elements to her (Fig.17).

Jon McCoy

For more information please visit:

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THE GALLERY

This month we feature:

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Vanja Todoric

AGONIST

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Adam Burn

Jason Seiler

Serge Birault

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Maciej Rebisz



Masters Of The Universe - TrapJAW

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(Right)

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Stand Your Ground

Adam Burn

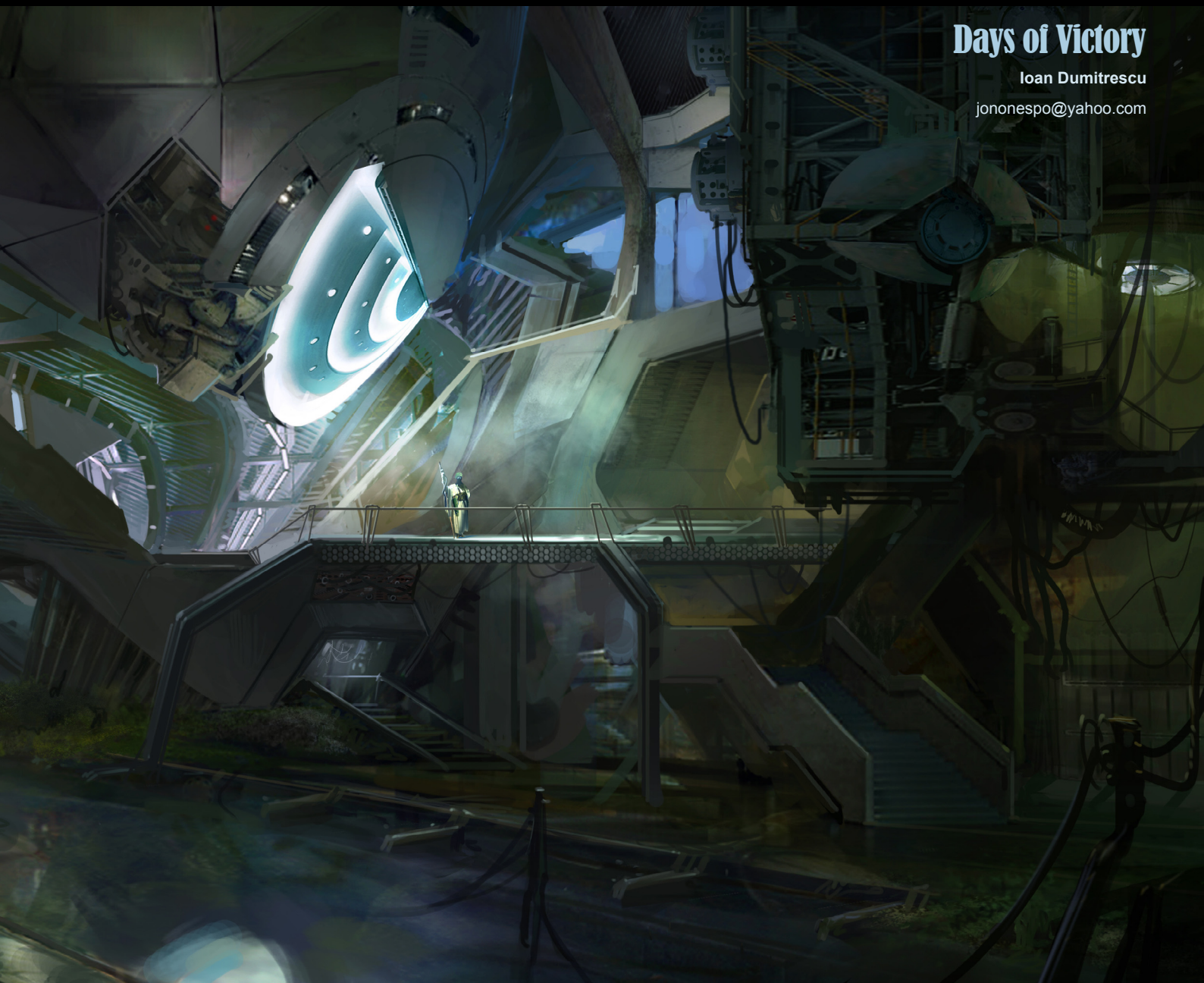
<http://phoenix-06.deviantart.com/>

adamburn@fsmail.net

(Below)







Days of Victory

Ioan Dumitrescu

jononespo@yahoo.com

Out of Milk

Maciej Rebisz

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Mick Jagger

Jason Seiler

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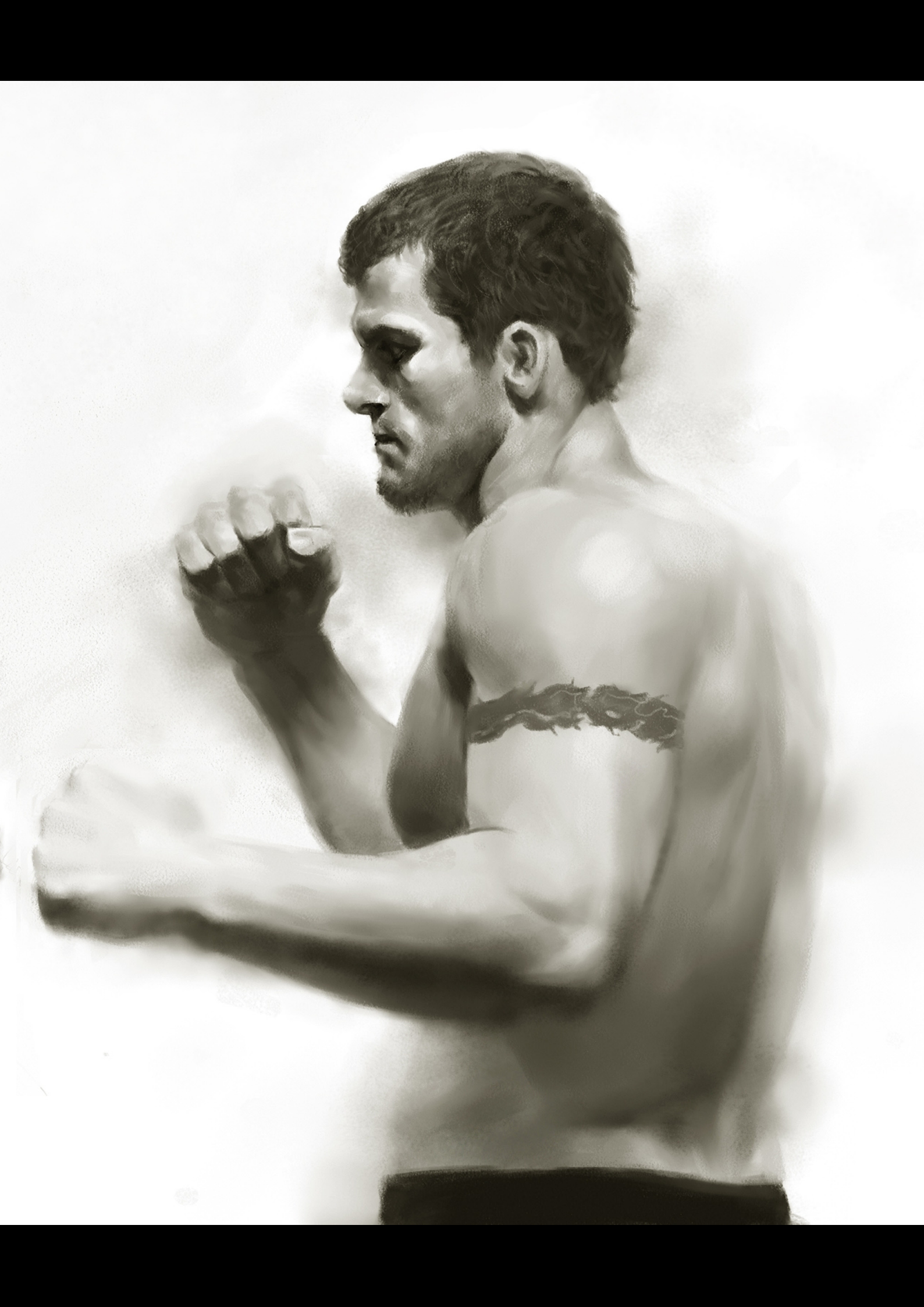
UFC Fighter

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Keeping the Stars

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Wasp Woman Returns

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Discover a Muse

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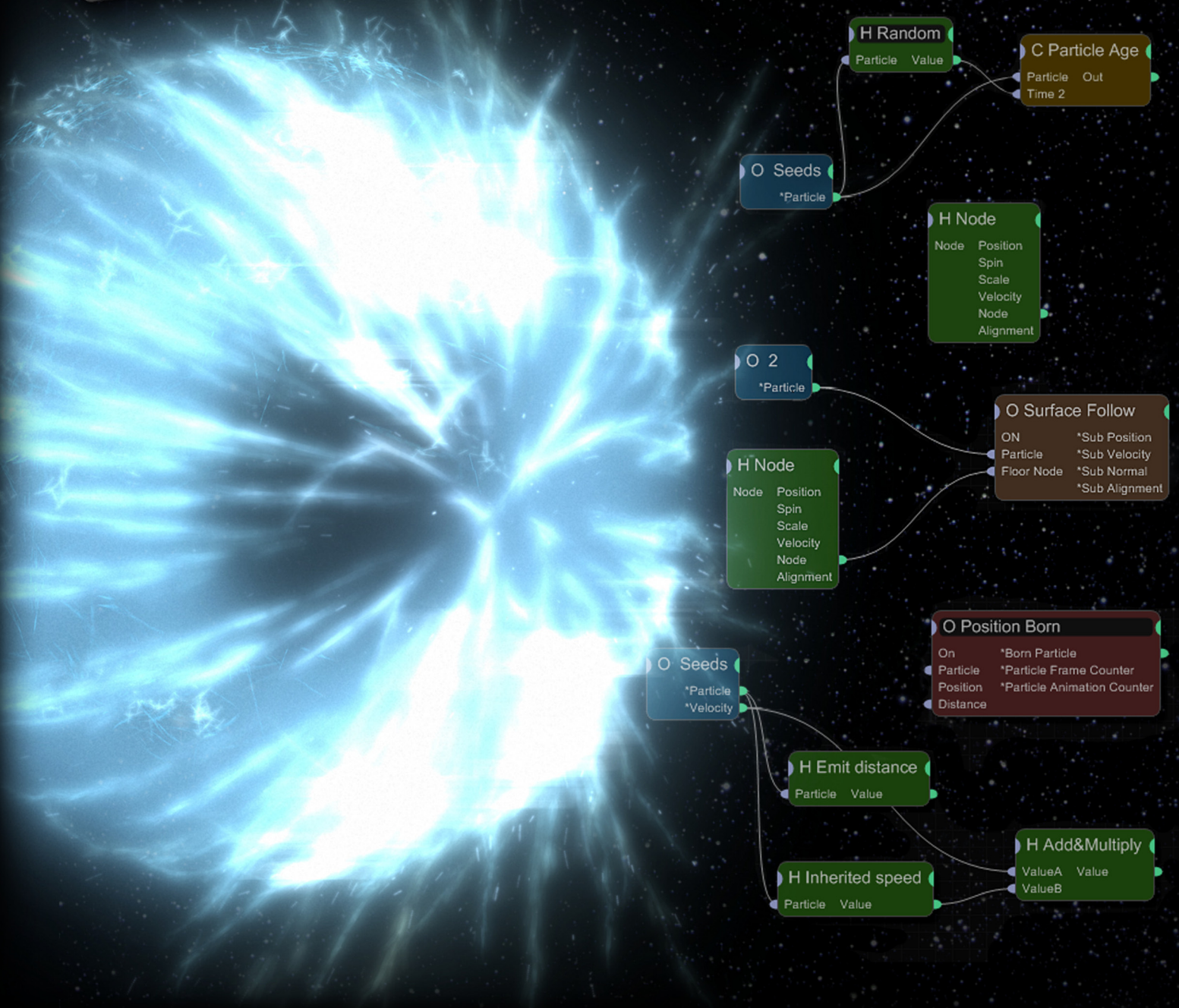
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Thinking Particles Part 1 - An Introduction

Hristo Velez - VFX Artist



CONCEPT ART FOR GAMES

Concept art for computer games is a fascinating field and an industry that a lot of aspiring digital artists would love to be involved with. This tutorial series has been written by some of the biggest and best names in the gaming industry, who will guide us through the way they would tackle the three main areas where concept work is required: environments, characters and accessories. The artists involved in this series have created a games brief themselves and are free to create their own vision of the description. They will reflect on the steps they choose to take from the point of receiving the brief up until they have created a completed concept for their required section.



Game type: First person shooter

Genre: Sci-Fi **Year:** 2300

The setting is Earth and the prison planet, Asturia. 90% of the game is on Asturia.

Plot summary: Lex Crane, a former police officer, is now the chief of security at Skye Global, the largest manufacturer of pharmaceuticals on the planet. Lex discovers something about the company he works for that he shouldn't have, and this starts a chain reaction that causes him to be wrongly accused for the murder of his family and a local politician. He is sentenced to life imprisonment on the prison planet of Asturia. On the prison planet he is constantly targeted by the criminals that he put there all those years ago, along with an unknown enemy within the prison walls hired by Skye Global. Lex was framed by Skye Global's CEO, Lance Shepherd, and Shepherd is now trying to have him killed in a place where nobody will miss him or even realize he's dead. Lex is trying to escape from the prison and return to Earth, where he's convinced he can find the evidence to clear his name. Along the way he forms unexpected alliances and is disappointed by shocking betrayals.

The environment: The setting is dark and cold. The planet is basically a giant rock. There is no lush foliage or vast bodies of water. Instead there are pits of oil and sludge. The terrain has large, jagged rock formations jutting out sporadically throughout the landscape. The sky is constantly filled with flashes of green lightning, which brings on poisonous rain storms.

There is a giant prison facility that has been placed on the planet to house the galaxy's most violent and evil criminal element. Escape is rarely ever attempted because of the sheer fact that outside the walls survival is not possible. The extremely harsh climate, along with the predatory dangers that exist on the planet, make it so that the prisoners would rather stay confined to prison. At least there is food, shelter, warmth etc., inside the jail.

Prisoners are forced to work as part of their sentence. The labor camps are set up throughout the perimeter surrounding the prison. They are forced to mine for the oil that exists deep within the surface of the planet. Along with these intensely laborious tasks of digging and mining, the prisoners are also constantly expanding the facility to house yet more prisoners.

Concept Art for Games: Part 1 - Environments

Software Used: Photoshop

Introduction

The assignment for this tutorial is to design the environment for a fictional game universe that takes place on a prison planet. In this first part I will focus on the main shot that establishes the main area. This scene will help set up the tone, style and direction for all the following concepts.

I've decided to design the prison as an underground facility. The prisoners are mining deep within it and the whole structure is shielded from the hostile environment due to the fact it is below the planet's surface. The sharp rock formations, together with the blue tone of the image, will help convey a feeling of tension and hostility.

This scene is very important, as it not only provides a base for the entire concept for the game, but also provides a dark and brooding entrance to the prison, which has potential for a great intro sequence. A descent into hell!

For the establishing shot I want to start with a dynamic angle that brings a sense of motion

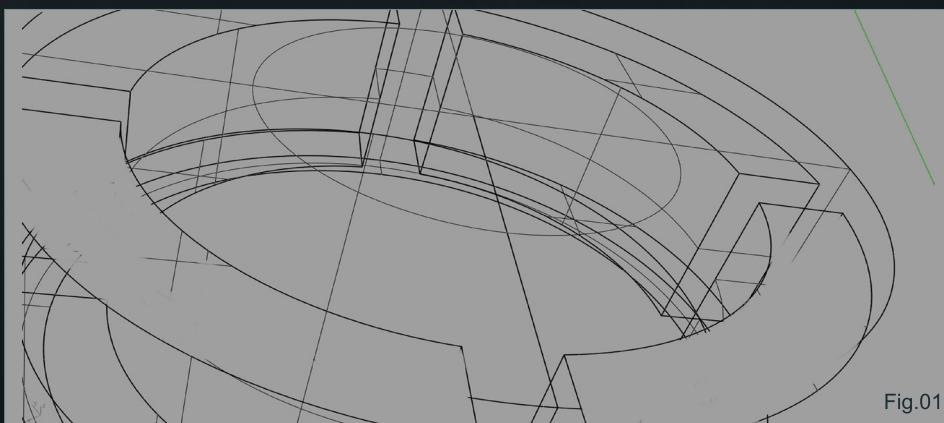


Fig.01

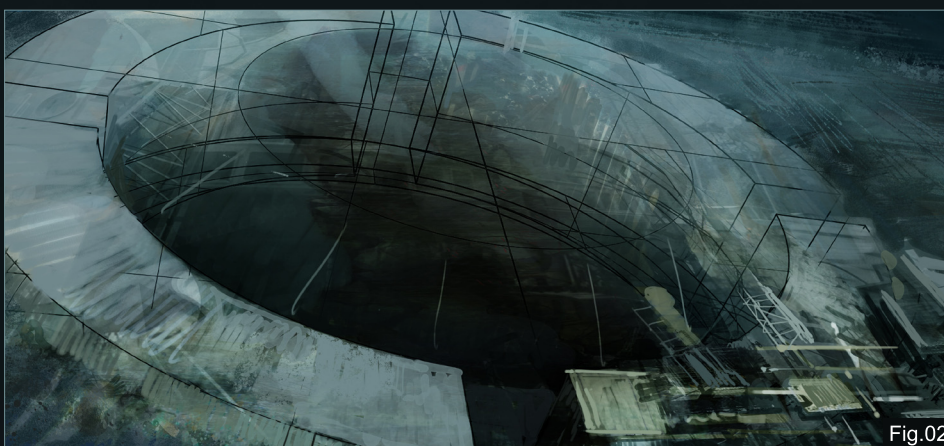


Fig.02

to the scene. I start with a wireframe cylinder created in a 3D program (**Fig.01**). This is simply to create some basic geometry that I will later paint over. I want this painting to be quite refined and well finished; to do this I make sure the underlying perspective is solid, so I won't have to go back at a later stage and correct it. In my

experience the more finished the painting, the more solid the underlying structure is required to be.

I start to add color and volume, to see if I can trigger the visual direction I want to pursue throughout the environment concepts. Since the

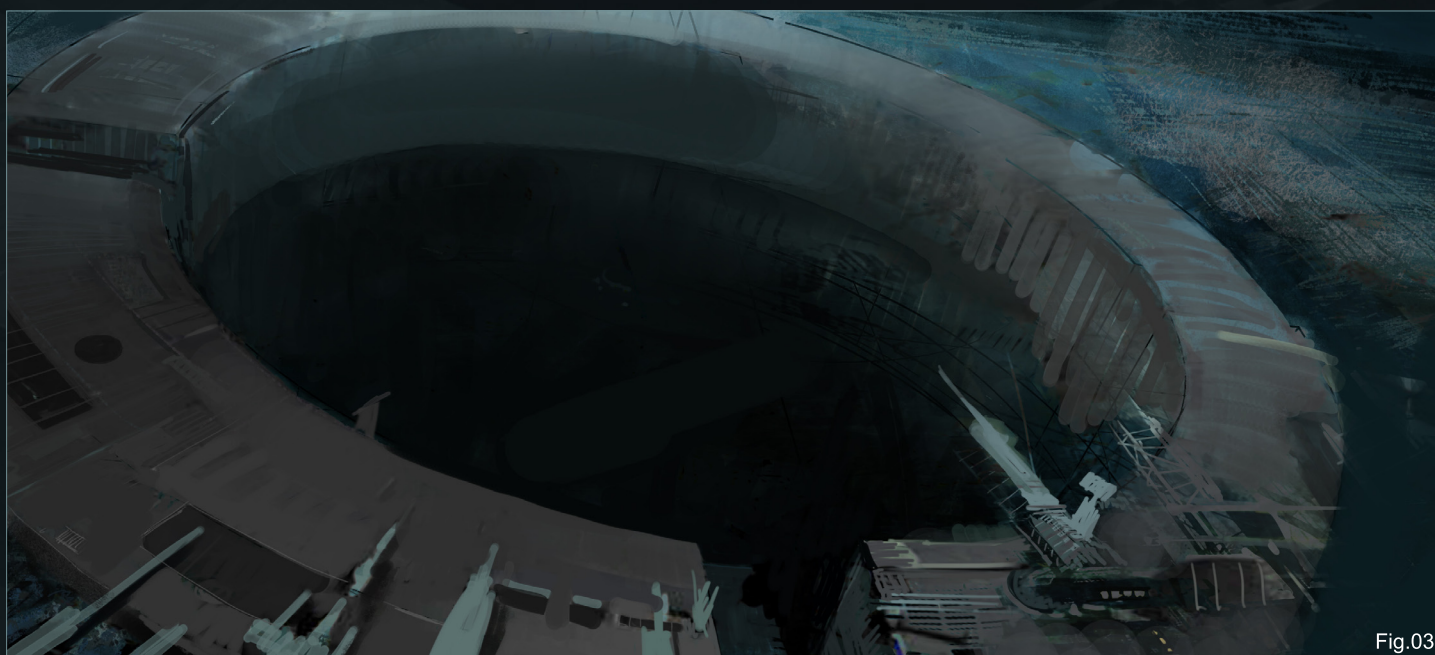


Fig.03



Fig.04

concept is that of a prison planet, it is vital that the colors reflect a hostile and cold environment to give the concepts the right mode and feeling (Fig.02).

I continue this process until I have established the main distribution of the color and values across my image. It is also important that the direction of the light has been incorporated by now. In these early stages I block everything in before going into any detail (Fig.03). This gives me a good overview and allows me to consider

the composition as a whole. I can always develop the finer details at a later stage.

I continue this process by further refining the image. I do this by continuing to block in the smaller structures in the foreground and painting the surrounding alien landscape in the background (Fig.04). I try to keep the background fairly vague without emphasizing too much detail. I do this as it is important not to divert the viewer's attention from the main focus of the concept.

I decide to shift the colors more towards a shade of blue by adjusting the hue and saturation (Fig.05). This again is to push the cold, dramatic feeling. I also paint in fog to certain areas to push the atmosphere further and add a greater sense of depth to the image. I start to wrap up the image by further defining the surface of the prison. To do this I focus on the reflective quality where the light source hits the surface and paint in texture details (Fig.06).



Fig.05

Thomas Pringle

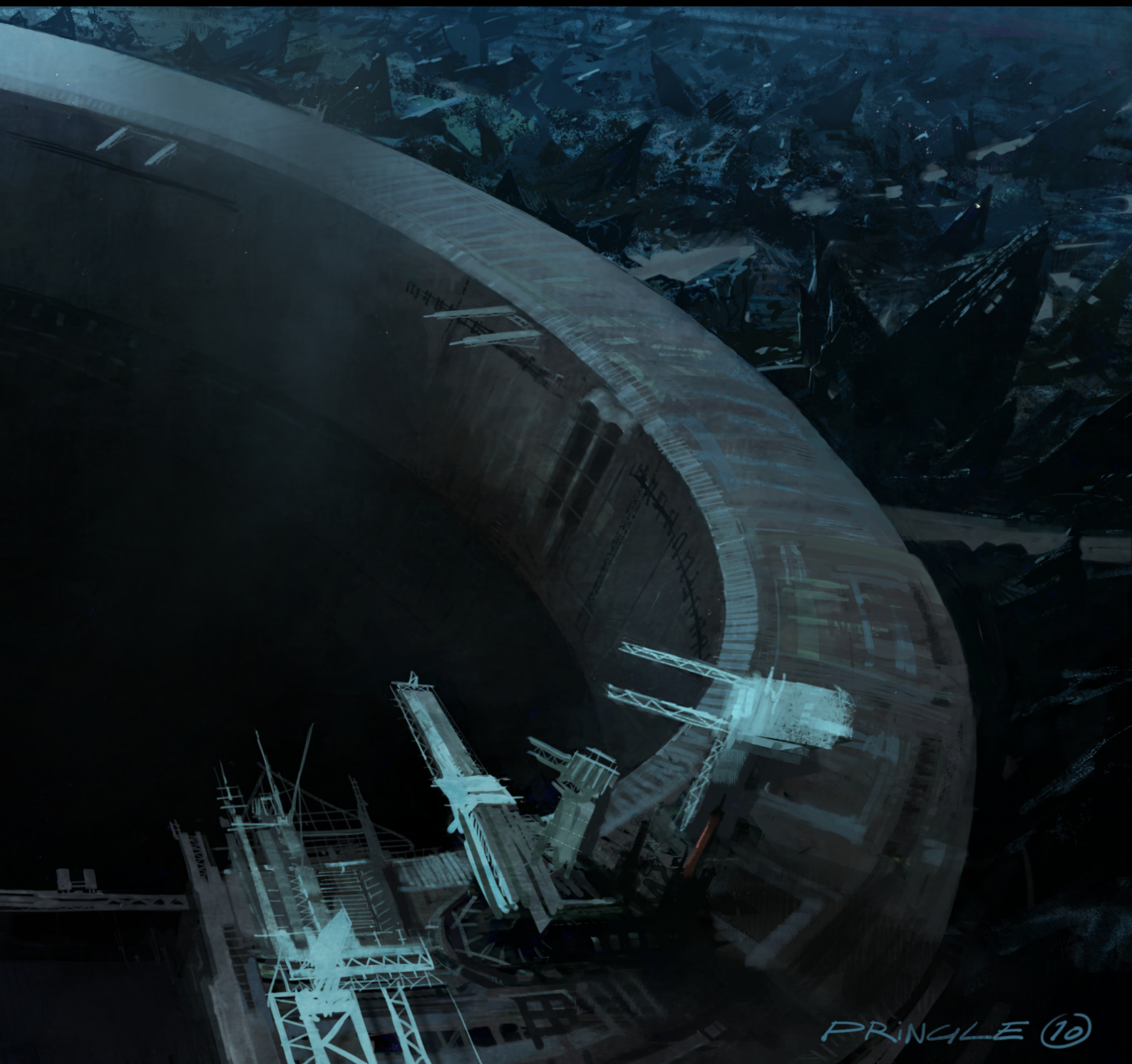
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PRINCIPLE ⑩

Fig.06



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M FUTURISTIC MARINES



Futuristic soldiers and marines appear in many pieces of digital art. We see them in huge sci-fi scenes or even as a lone soldier wandering in a deserted landscape. They regularly feature in first person shooter computer games and even on the covers of books and comics. In this tutorial series our artists will be showing us how to create an original futuristic soldier that could live and thrive in some of the different environments a marine may face. The artists will also explore different methods of creating futuristic and organic armour and weaponry.

Chapter 1: Evolved Future Marine | Svetlin Velinov | July 10

Chapter 2: Hot Planet Hydro Marine | Ignacio Bazan Lazcano | Aug 10

Chapter 3: All-Terrain Marine | Richard Tilbury | Sep 10

Chapter 4: Female Marine | Alex Ruiz | Oct 10

Painting Futuristic Marines: Part 1 - Evolved Future Marine

Software Used: Photoshop

Hi, all. I'm very glad that 3DTotal gave me the opportunity to develop this idea and show the different stages behind creating a futuristic marine. I hope this tutorial will be useful to everyone and will give helpful advice and knowledge to those who still want to learn and advance in the field of concept art. The purpose of such work is mostly supporting the film and game industries. It makes the work of the concept artist very important because you need the right vision, and to create an original product, as this is what makes it successful. The final result is the fruit of the work of many people, but the artist always has an important role and is crucial for the project.

The theme of this tutorial is a futuristic marine. This made me think of a scene with a soldier who is being ambushed by flesh-eating worms. Let's get started!

Sketch

A serious production requires a lot of preparation work before the real creation process starts. Lots of different possible thumbnails are outlined. Positions are sketched; diverse visions and designs are tested. In this case we don't have the necessary time for this step, nor is it the tutorial's purpose.

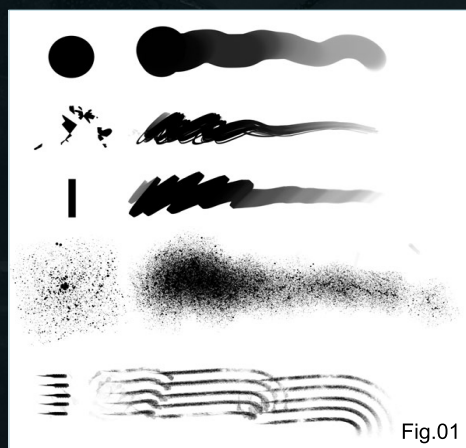


Fig.01



Fig.02

My first task is to make the concept for the composition clear. We can use a Hard brush to build the silhouettes and to compose its elements (Fig.01). The masks are chaotic and expressive, as in the beginning I'm not searching for a distinctive shape or volume. When I was a child I enjoyed staring at the textures of flooring and the objects around me. Looking at the structure and the patterns of the stones, the wood and any other surrounding things is a nice way to develop one's imagination. You start seeing interesting shapes and volumes; faces and figures; people

and animals. This is why my first task is to chaotically sketch masks and lines until you see a definite shape that could be the frame and structure of the image. Achieving a good end result might be pure coincidence but the satisfaction from using such a process is huge, and the development of a character in this way is fun (Fig.02).

Main Color and Light

This is the stage where the basis of the color is laid down and the light is built up. It is a quite rough version of the final vision of the character.

After having built up and structured some composition in grayscale, we define the colour range for the illustration on a new layer (Fig.03). For this we can use a picture, an old drawing or a texture. We place the selected image above the sketch and from the drop down menu select Blending Property Color. Later we can add or remove colors by using selection or moving certain parts to other places, or you can just fill in with the brush. This is the stage where the contrast and the intensity of the colors are set, as well as the light source.



Completing the Concept

Next we're going to develop the character and all the other details, like the weapons and the armor, but this time with colour. Actually this process ends when the picture is completed, because there's always something to be corrected or added to the initial idea. The deadlines are quite often very tight in this field. At this stage we set the direction for the further development of the character (Fig.04).

Overpainting and Rendering

After taking the character to a fairly advanced level, we must do our best to think about how we might finish the piece. As we have the luxury of time, we can develop it even more by finishing the main idea and adding the details on the materials. It is now that we have real creative freedom.

The details are an important element of completing the character (Fig.05). They are what makes it unique and original. The more original the concept, the better and more successful the end product is. This is what every artist aims for, in order to keep at a consistent level that shows quality, and that ensures the success of the studio and gets the artist larger and more interesting projects.

Lighting Effects

When painting futuristic armor it is absolutely necessary to add something that shows how the armor fortifies the character's strength. There must be something that translates the force and abilities it gives in a visual language. As the action takes place in the future, it must show a futuristic level of technology as well. This can be shown by including glowing elements to the armor. The typical elements of the armor are now set in place. On a new layer we define the areas where we want to make the glowing effect stronger (Fig.06). I've marked these areas in red in order to make it clear how to reach this effect in your own work. We use Gaussian blur to disperse the light and get the desired glow effect, and finish off by setting the layer on a new blending option (Linear Dodge).

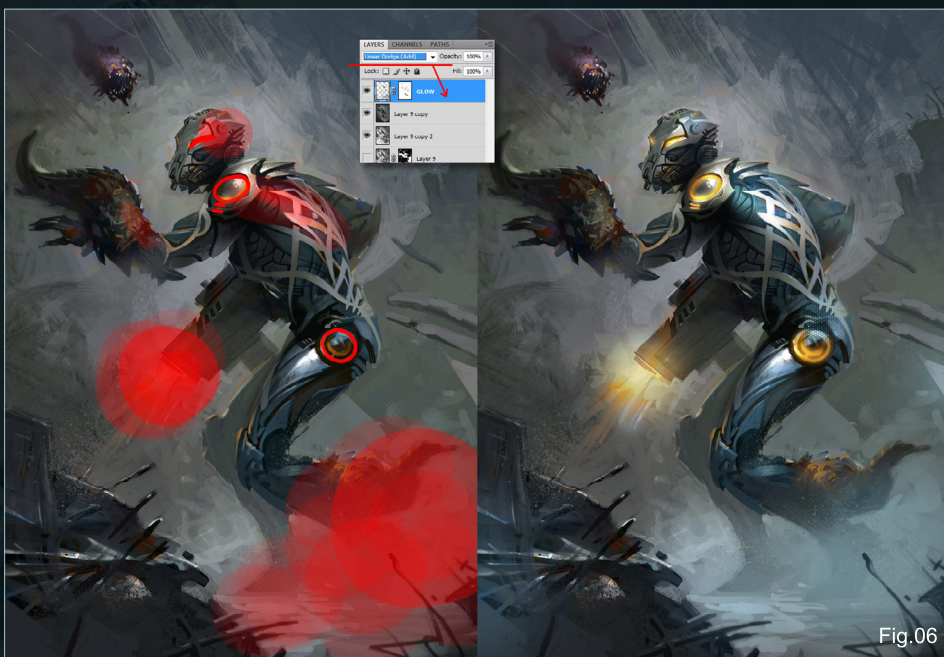


Fig.06

Texture

In order to give a futuristic appearance to the armor, it is necessary to use a texture that reflects a futuristic effect. For this we need to try different materials and underline their structure. We create a new layer and change the blending mode to Linear Dodge. Then use a Hard brush, which you can select as a "texture" from the Options menu. I've marked the areas where the texture is applied in red on Fig.07. After reaching the desired effect we create a layer



Fig.07

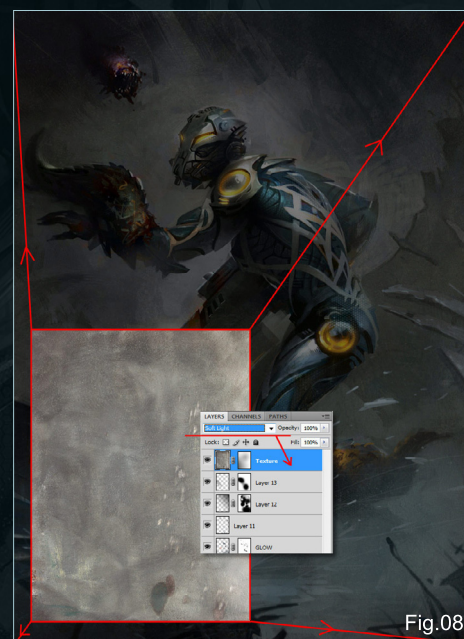


Fig.08

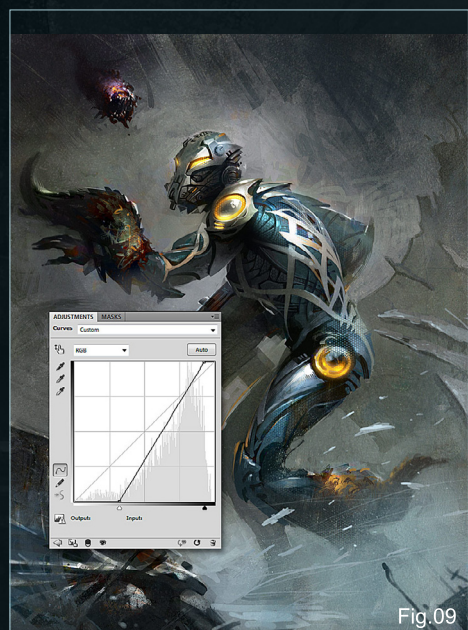


Fig.09

mask and define the areas where we want to use the pattern.

The second stage is to texture the whole picture, and then finalize it by adding soft light to the blending mode of the layer (Fig.08).

Color Corrections

The last stage before praising ourselves and finishing the work is the color correction (Fig.09). We create a new adjustment layer and use curves to set the desired corrections (Ctrl + M). Strengthen and define the intensity of the

contrast and for better control over the process, paint in the mask for the layer. This almost ends our work on the concept. The last stage is the artist's signature.

Now we can praise ourselves! The character is complete and developed, and we can move to the next task. For me it is drinking a very cold beer. To those who enjoyed this tutorial, I hope you were inspired and learnt something new. Pleasant drawing!

Svetlin Velinov

For more from this artist visit:

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Epitomised by late Industrial Revolution where diesel powers everything

Chapter 5: D’Inginis - D’Machinis

Final leg of tour looks at both the heart of realm of D’Machinis & Inginis - meaning Machines & engines respectively.

Painting Steampunk Environments: Chapter 5 - D'Machinis

Software Used: Photoshop

Realm of the Diesel Punk Engineers

Welcome to this series of workshops, encompassing the Five Ages of Steampunk within the alternate Realm of "Steam PanGloria Globus the 3rd" (SteamWorld for short).

We have now reached the final part of our tour of the InterRealms, which has encompassed different eras and themes within the five interconnected districts of **SteamWorld** (D'Automobilis, D'Vinci, D'Metronomus, Diesel & D'Inginis).

The first leg of the tour started within the **Victorian Era of D'Automobilis**, where we had the opportunity to briefly discover how transport became the mainstream thrust of the Brittanic Victorians, starting with the steam engine. We also looked into designing and developing a steampunk transport and environment using a themed period as a starting basis.

The second part of the tour involved travel within the **Medieval Era of D'Vinci**; an era of high renaissance architecture, places of worship and towering edifices of rock amidst a skeletal frame.

Within the **clockwork fantasy** of the third realm **D'Metronomus**, our intrepid explorers undertook a historic tour within the oldest heart of the inter-realms while an appreciation of the moss-covered texturing of various elements was shared.

And in the fourth Realm, we travelled to the deep underwater machine world of **D'Inginis Dieselis**, which represented the tireless powerhouse that generated steam and aether for all.

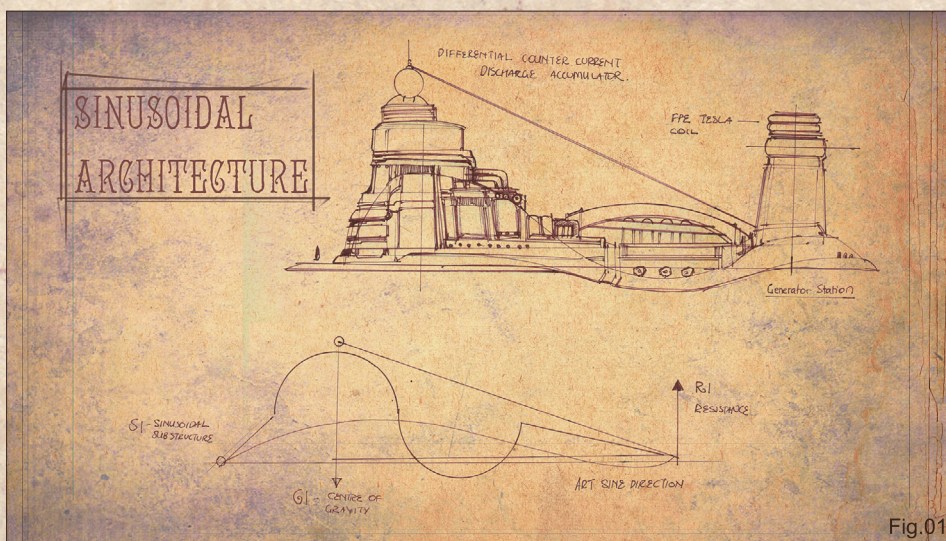


Fig.01

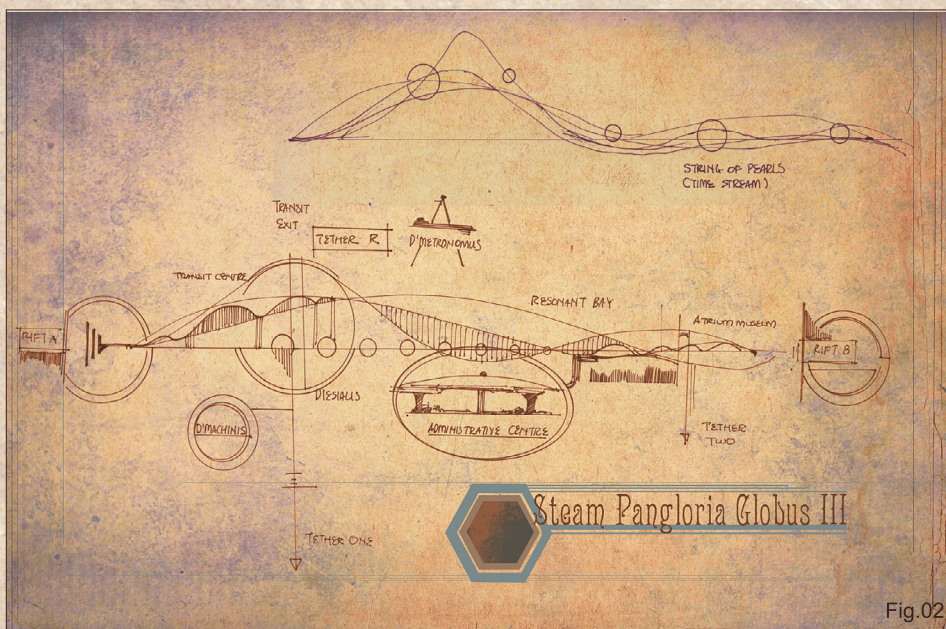


Fig.02

The Guild of D'Machinis

Now that we have travelled the five elements and time zones of the SteamWorld, perhaps it is best if we sit back and appreciate the wonders of the telegraphic modern hubris of the D'Machinis metropolis. For underneath a massive timebridge supporting all five interlocking cities and realms, there lies the D'Machinis administrative centre - providing new extensions to new Steampunk exhibits and allowing sub-genres to grow. This timebridge spans various cracks in space-time, which are barely noticeable within perceived realities.

Unfettered by the various aetheric limitations of the various Realms, denizens of D'Machinis

employ transports of advanced steam-powered engineering allowing for vertical and horizontal movement through air, water and space-time. Large or small, there is freedom to move about but at a cost. The spill-off of aetheric usage generates toxic gases, and as such clean manufactured atmosphere is encased within a atmospheric bubble whilst areas surrounding it are toxic to any living inhabitant.

And thus, we come to our final assignment: The development of a key art illustration for use in production. This entails developing an environment that will provide a lighting, mood, color and textural feel that can also serve as art direction to any artist at a glance (**Fig.01**).

The Guild City

The early forefathers decided the Guild City of D'Machinis, would be a hub of telecommunications in celebration of the telegraphic aether transmitter. As such, all forms would adopt the sinusoid as their main inspiration.

Establishing a key feature such as this allows for main and sub forms to reinforce one another from the shape of roofs, elevation of a park, construction of walls, curvature of streets (any excuse to add a curve as opposed to a straight line; this gives the observer a larger than life/ what is around the corner feeling towards the) and placement of public and local lights (how strong the light is).

In **Fig.01** we utilize the sinusoid to consist of a differential potential gradient. A height difference will allow for a counter current of energy potential/vs aetheric potential to be generated analogous to the movement of electrons within an electric current.

In addition, there is the design of the main housing unit vs a transmission/power generating unit on the other (**Fig.02**).



Fig.04

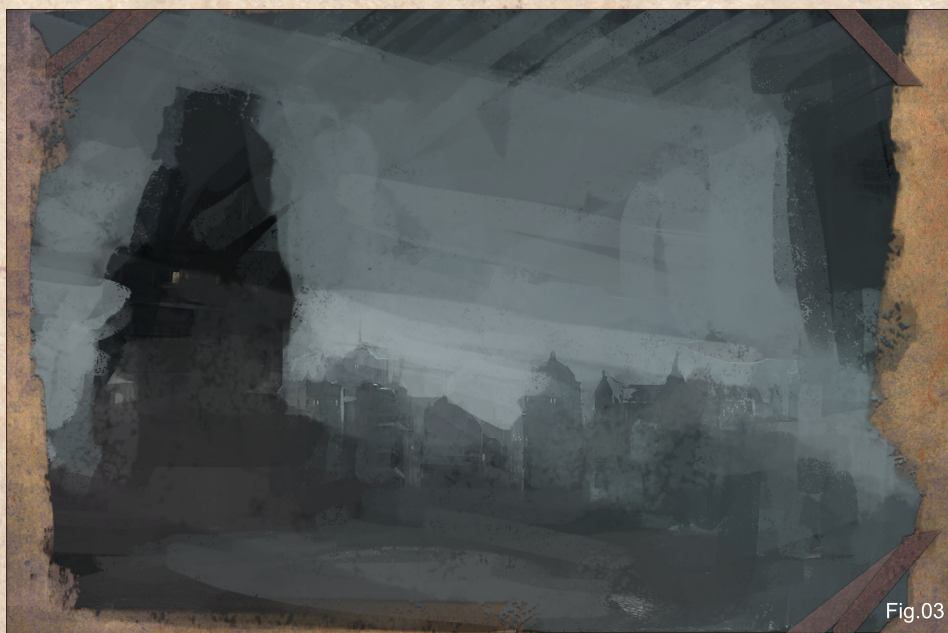


Fig.03

Taking this one step further we have the schematics of the timebridge, a bridge that spans the various cracks in time. Using a multiple of various sinusoids, these can accommodate for variations in a time phase shift (akin to an earthquake tremor) allowing for people travelling between different realms to remain wholly intact in mid tremor (without dissipating into a multitude of parts).

The Key Art - Sketch

No prior preliminary sketch has been produced in this instance (**Fig.03**). Instead, we will start

the composition as if we were painting en plein air, on site at the scene. So let's start by utilizing a simple two point perspective (2PP) - with one visible vanishing point (VP) at the lower 1/3rd of the canvas and a second invisible VP.

The initial composition (**Fig.03**) can consist of a few large shapes upon the canvas. Some artists choose to utilize the main color of the canvas as a backdrop, but in this case we're going to use a faint grey-blue wash to provide a monochromatic cool feel. Having established this, we can move on to adding some secondary elements (sub forms) to reinforce the main shapes. Ensure that you do not go into too much detail as this stage (**Fig.04**).

Design is fairly flexible and, by utilizing the sinusoidal art direction (see Fig.01), try to establish a good shot of one of the sinusoid structures. A faint suggestion of warmth, perhaps from a local light, can be added to accentuate the aspect of the near structure vs the backdrop. In addition, try and work in the faint suggestion of a generator tower (far right) whilst up above, the underside of the Timebridge can be hinted at.

I imagine the underside to consist of floating land pieces, unified by a variety of pipes, struts,

landings, gardens and vertical shafts that allow communication between each Realm and the administrative centre of D'Machinis.

The Key Art - Workup

Having developed the establishing shot, expand the canvas slightly to adopt a more generic landscape view. The offset of this is that we lose the intimate gesture and feeling of this establishing shot. So make a mental note that we may come back to this at a later stage and work more on this establishing shot, or perhaps crop the final image (**Fig.05**).

It's important not to be too fixed on any particular idea, although trying to change a worked up image later can involve a bit of time and painstaking repainting. The option to re-crop is akin to being a image taker with a photo facsimile device. If it looks and feels good, then its good to go in that direction.

Next up, we're going to look at the expanded canvas from grayscale towards a color wash. This is sliced into various segments to show the development from an establishing shot towards

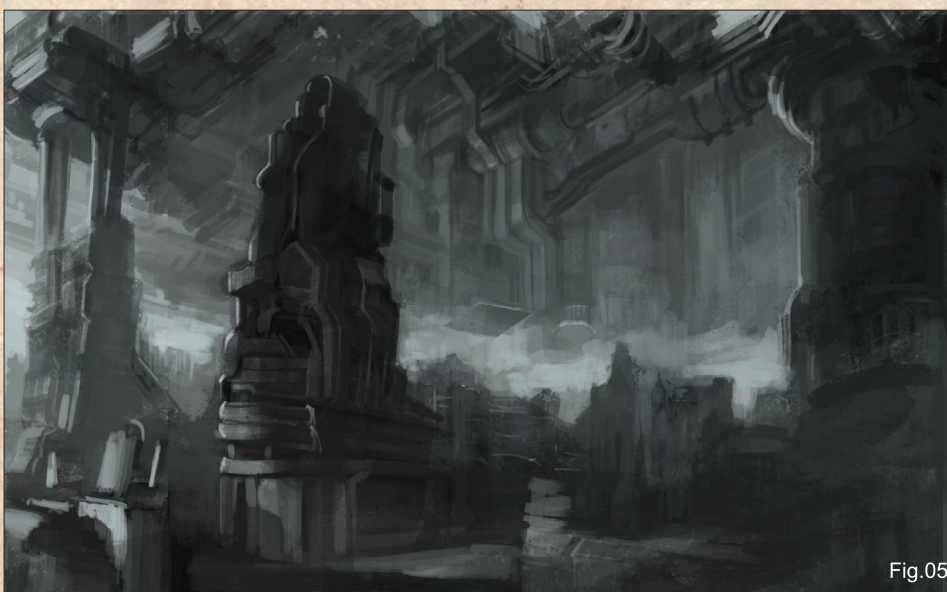


Fig.05



Fig.06

a coloured grayscale (**Fig.06**). In developing a grayscale image to a color image, the main challenge is to proceed in a methodical step-wise fashion utilizing thin washes of color that eventually build up towards a whole.

The Key Art - Lighting & Color

Working the illustration from large to smaller shapes, the next aspect to consider is that of local lighting.

Utilizing knowledge and the foundation established from the previous workshops, we can produce a dramatic shape by uplighting the buildings (**Fig.07**). This method is used in existing hotels and key buildings across

various cities. In this instance, this steampunk metropolis is powered by aetheric gasses that take on a neon glow like appeal of a wide gamut of colors.

We can take this methodology further and expand various local lighting conditions across the landscape (**Fig.08**). Keep in mind the image is undergoing a lot of WIP reconstruction and as such will invariably look like a bombsite sometimes.

The Key Art - Foreground objects

We are now two-thirds through this illustration, and need to consider object interest, VFX,

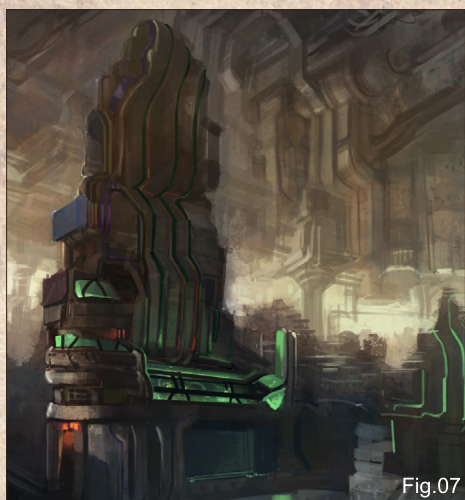


Fig.07

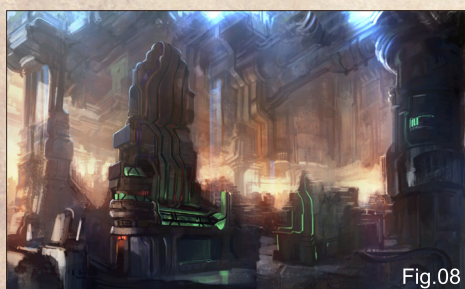


Fig.08

atmosphere and global illumination/grading. Thus, let us tackle this in a step-wise fashion. Building upon the various steamtrams and transports of the previous Realms, there is not much more to go into the final design of the steam hover objects in this Realm. The designs are more of an exercise in plausible shapes and so are best blocked in as dark silhouettes (Fig.09).

The key to designing without much forethought is to have a good understanding of shapes and relationships. Thus in this regard, the use of repeating pipes, and cylindrical drums attached towards a bus/tram like shape are established.

Once the various shapes are developed, be mindful that you can color grade these objects in relation to the foreground, midground or background.

The Key Art - VFX & Final Grade

The next aspect that we can look at is the time of day.

Determining what the time of day is in a painting, can affect greatly the final finish. In our image, we render three different color modes: day, night and twilight (Fig.10).

- **Daylight** affords a fairly monochromatic, reddish-orange feel.
- **Night** affords saturated strong colors due to the various neon lights employed
- **Twilight** affords the best of both worlds - it is fairly light, yet still with elements of strong, saturated neon local lights.

As we're going with a feeling of twilight, one we need to cover the illustration with painstaking local lights that fit the relative perspective and spatial relationship. For this, it is sometimes useful to paint upside down and flip the view horizontally so that the brain can analyze the image from different views (Fig.11).

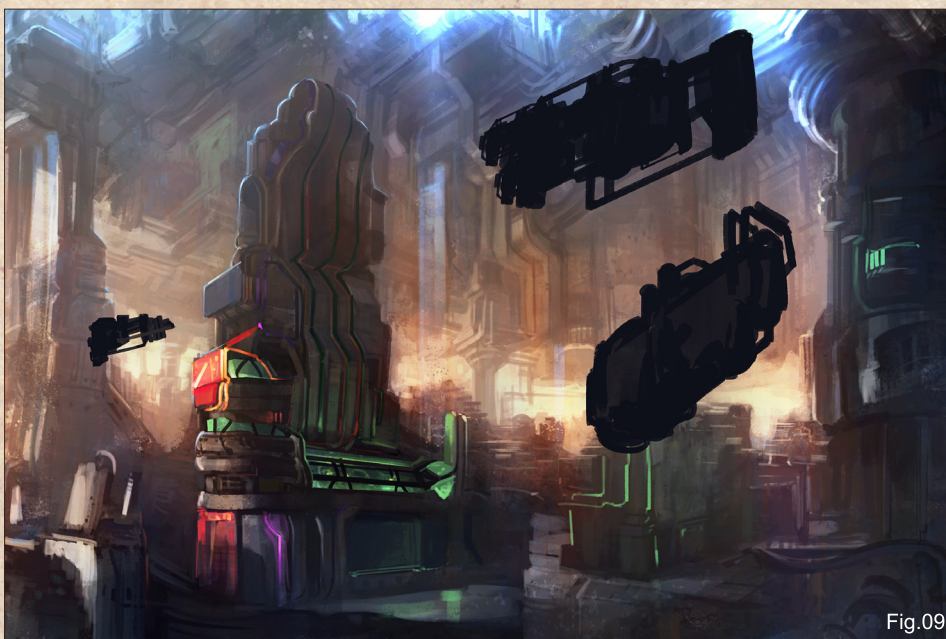


Fig.09

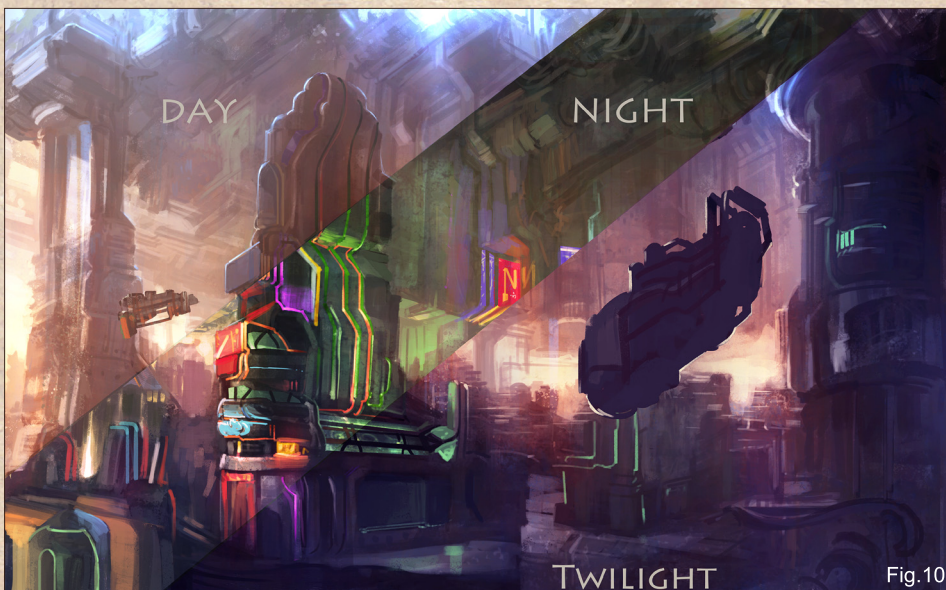


Fig.10

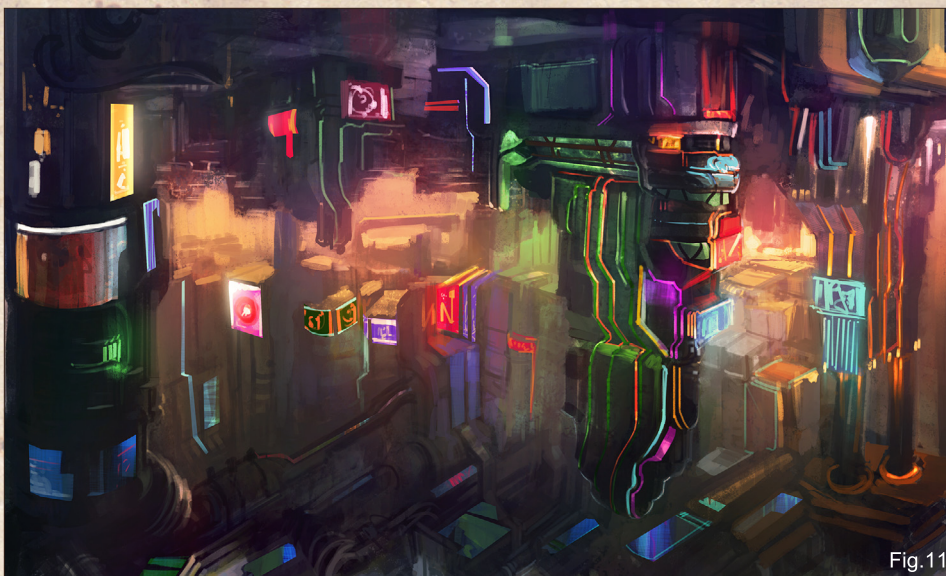
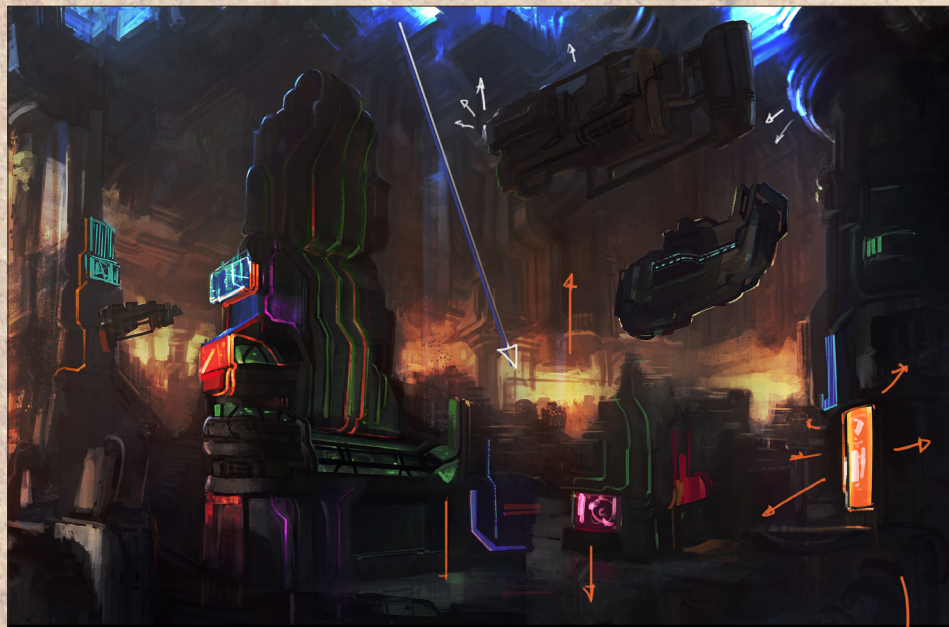


Fig.11

At this point the overall illustration is becoming quite overwhelmed with color and all the subtle shapes and readability from the establishing value has been lost or nearly obliterated (Fig.12). In addition, the more details added, the less improvement there is in perceived overall finish/value. Keeping to the established hierarchy of values is quite important to ensure readability at all stages, so perhaps it might be easier to abandon this image and restart again from the establishing shot.

This is what I would do in a normal circumstance, on the reasoning that a second or a third attempt would develop a better piece.



However sometimes this just isn't possible because of lack of time/deadlines - either you have to move onto another painting, your transport is here and you have to go elsewhere (home/work), or the printer says that your painting has to go to print now. Time's up!

Faced with such a situation, do you:

1. Give up and throw a sickie? (Your dog spilled a fluorescent drink onto the canvas)
2. Be a pro and remedy the situation
3. Ask for a miracle
4. Utilize more manpower (sometimes employ 2-5 studios to help out to ensure quality - more cooks equals more bandwidth)
5. Take a few moments. Take a walk. Come back with fresher eyes.

In this instance, the image is too well lit and overpowered by a range of colors, and requires a contrast of motion vs static structures. By donning the AD's (Art Director's) hat and providing a brutal analysis of the image, we can formulate an exit strategy (Fig.13):

1. Darken the overall image
2. Allow for more focal lighting (horizon and only employ some local lights to be prominent)
3. Punch up the saturation locally, and repaint the far distant atmospheric skylight
4. Apply some motion blur to the steam vehicles (remember to apply these only towards the

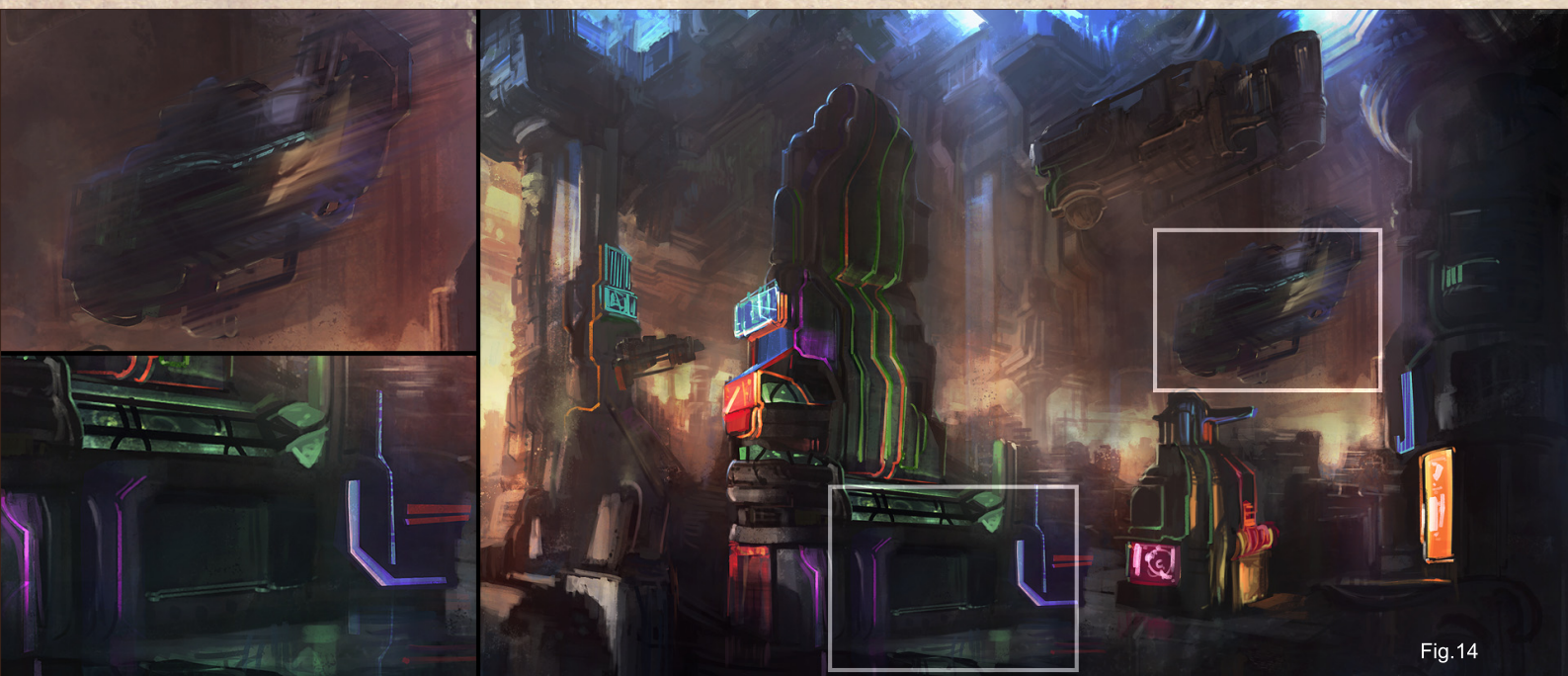


Fig.14

edges of some vehicles, or all that lovely design is obliterated)

5. Apply reflected lighting (from the local lights)

Having applied all these measures, there is that last 1% to tidy up, in terms of some focal details and some slight textural suggestions of various lit planes to suggest different surface materials. Lastly, take a few moments to apply some subtle color grades and faint suggestions of smoke, pollution and steam to allow for overlying elements and add depth to the overall image (Fig.14).

When there is no further changes that you feel are required to sell this image convincingly, it is best to stop and keep some element of energy, mood and atmosphere. It's time to call this done!

Sky-Blue, Sun-Red, & Deep-Blue

Global illumination and color lighting is a fascinating subject, and as a final summary let us discuss this slightly obscure subject matter (Fig.15).

In general, one finds that in a blue-green atmospheric planet irradiated by a blue-yellow

star, the following would be generally true: that the sky is blue-violet and the daybreak/evening is golden red within the human visible spectrum of light. Cats, owls and E.T. might perceive a shorter or longer spectrum of visible light, and if they could describe to you what they saw,

perhaps in their world the sky would be silver green and the oceans cerulean tinged with red...

Thus, light wavelengths are a bit more complicated and are only thus due to perceived visible light by the human eye. Blue (475nm) is

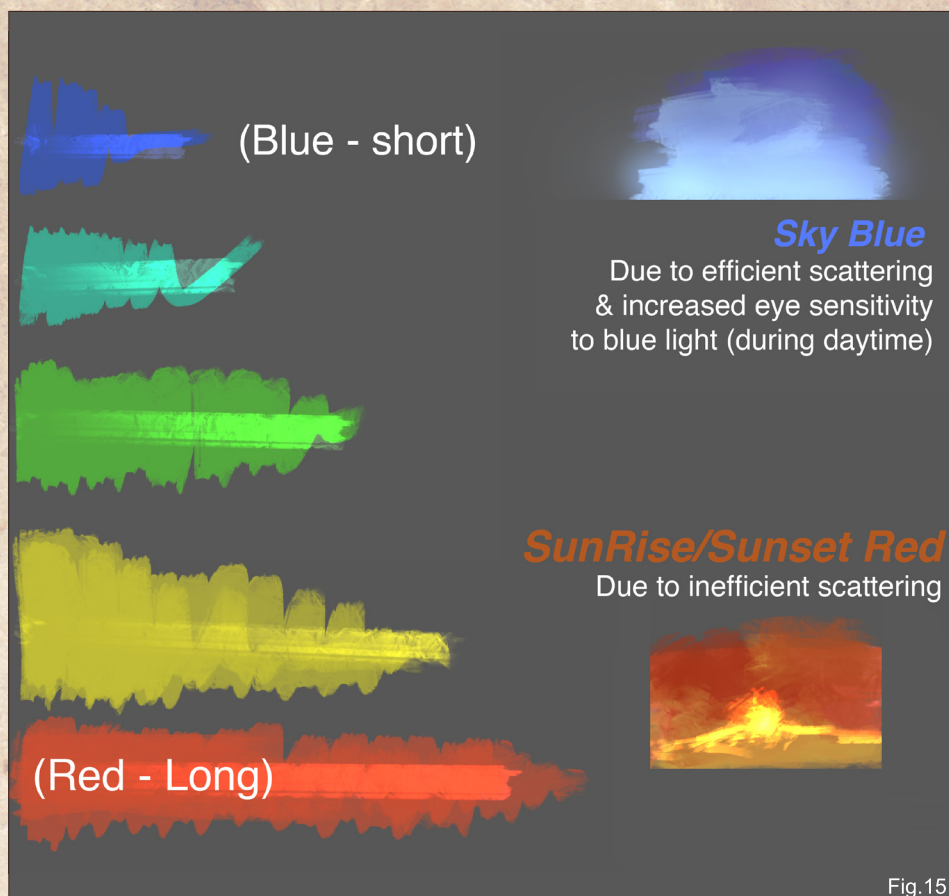


Fig.15

The Five Ages of Steampunk

Painting Steampunk Environments: Chapter 5 - D'Machinis



a shorter wavelength than red (longest 650nm) and violet is the shortest (450nm)

Thus, for global illumination it works as follows (but can be slightly confusing): During Daytime, the sky is blue primarily due to efficient scattering. In addition, our eyes are more sensitive to blue light, and the sun pumps out more blue light than violet. Whereas during sunrise/sunset, the red wavelength (longest) is less efficiently scattered. The longer wavelengths of red and orange effectively eliminate any blue/violet from the sky and result in a blood red-orange evening/sunrise.

Thus, if red light is longer, how is it that red is the first color to be lost underwater?

This can be explained by the amount of visible light absorbed underwater. Longer wavelengths are greatly absorbed underwater, and thus red and yellow wavelengths are lost initially whilst the shorter wavelengths of blue and violet are least readily absorbed. This also explains why whitish/pale objects underwater appear blue.

Lastly, at 10m depth about 1/4th of sunlight is available and almost non-existent at 100m depth or more. This can affect how one depicts an underwater image accordingly and requires local lighting to depict any colours below 100m depth.

End of D'Machinis Tour

Thus, we come to the end of our whirlwind tour of the various aspects of the Steampunk sub-genre; of which there are often new and evolving sub-categories that encompass the elements of Punk/Steampunk in their various incarnations in popular media.

Lastly, as with all things, there isn't any hard and fast rule to producing your own unique take on Steampunk. As long as it looks plausible (70:30 rule - 70% based in reality, 30% imagined), and certain aspects can be reasoned to have some function, you are onto a winning ticket.

So have fun! Steampunk your favourite vampire or retro fit your DeLorean of choice and perhaps be as bold as to retro fit your computer and everyday garments with subtle elements of

steam as part of the Neo-Victorian culture. The world is your oyster; you can Steampunk that too.

I leave you with an observation: Everyone has within them the power of dreams and imagination. Therefore, I believe anyone can paint and draw, how well is entirely a different matter altogether. Nevertheless, draw to be the best, the best artist living in a generation; draw because it provides therapy and hours of fun; draw because it is a way of life, a lifestyle, and draw because perhaps the secret of the universe lies in those who can dream and bring worlds of imagining to life.

Chee Ming Wong

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<http://www.opusartz.com>

Or contact them at:

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PAINTING FUTURISTIC CITIES



This tutorial series will be made up of six chapters exploring the creation of Futuristic Cities. Each chapter will be tackled by a different artist, who will use their boundless skill and experience to guide you through all the necessary aspects of creating your Futuristic City. Our artists will guide you step by step through the process, starting by sketching and creating your ideas, they then will show you how to incorporate the specific themes of their topic chapter to show a different aspect to the Futuristic City.

Chapter 1 | Issue 052 Mar 2010 | Wealthy City

Chapter 2 | Issue 052 Apr 2010 | Docks

Chapter 3 | Issue 053 May 2010 | Skyscrapers and flying traffic

Chapter 4 | Issue 054 Jun 2010 | Slum City

Chapter 5 | Issue 055 Jul 2010 | Bazaar/ indoor market place

Chapter 6 | Issue 056 Aug 2010 | Aerial shot over a city at sunset

“When it comes to making work for a client or to sell, knowing how to compose the image and use perspective correctly makes a big difference.”

Chapter 5 - Bazaar/ indoor market place

Software used: Photoshop

Introduction

The aim of this tutorial is to tell you about some "tricks of the trade", and techniques to obtain a good perspective and composition. These tips should help you to be able to create an attractive image and detail it quickly.

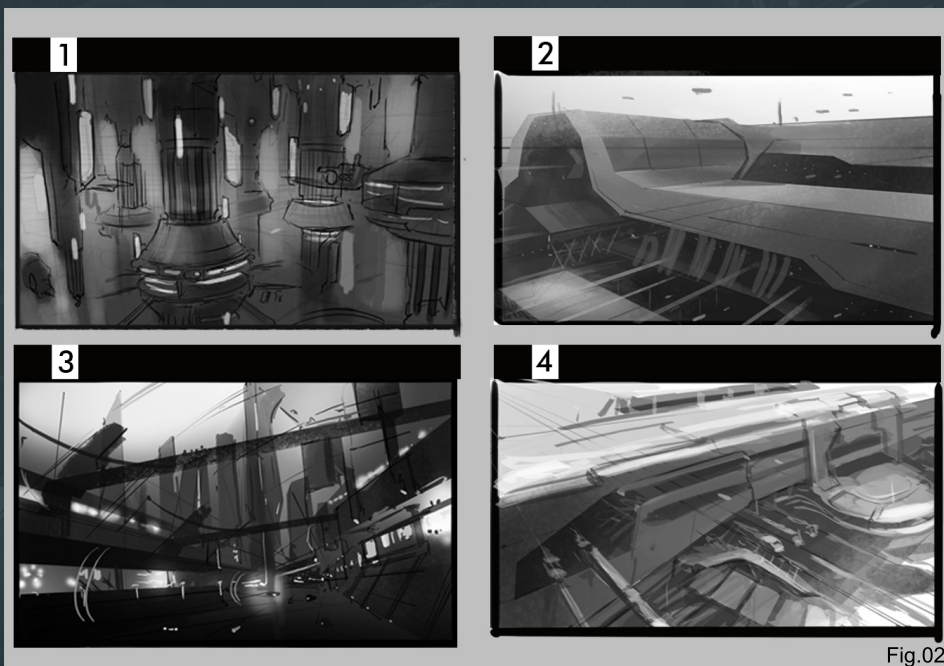
When thinking about this tutorial, my first thought was to create a market or futuristic bazaar scene that contained a commercial center, and a zone full of shops and shoppers. It was quite difficult though to think of an original idea, because there is so much art dedicated to science fiction and films like *Star Wars*, *Aliens*, *Avatar*, *Blade Runner*, etc. It can be difficult sometimes to paint something that hasn't been done already.

Thus, to find "the idea", I made several drawings. I discarded the first two because neither seemed convincing. Nevertheless I have included one as an example so you can see the searching process (Fig.01).

I started over again and made four new sketches, but this time I did not give them color or detail. I made thumbnails so I could see the general idea better. I decided that I liked the third option (Fig.02).

The picture

Once I had chosen the thumbnail to develop, I polished the idea and added more detail to it. I then had to recreate the thumbnail at a larger scale and in greater detail. To start with I raised the vanishing points, and defined the forms and structures by adding further detail. It is important to maintain the correct perspective and composition; to do this the first thing I do is to define the horizon, as this depends on where we are viewing the scene from. Depending on where the horizon is located, what we will show



or tell will change. For an aerial shot it is better to place the horizon higher on the image, but if you are trying to show how an ant would view the scene the horizon would need to be lower (Fig.03).

However in this scene there is more than one vanishing point and the horizon is twisted, to give the scene a greater sense of action and movement (Fig.04).

At this point I need to say more about composition. To compose is to order, balance and locate the elements of a drawing in an attractive and interesting way. To create an interesting composition we have to break down the symmetry and find balance by means of shapes and perspective. If you center the vanishing point, everything will become symmetrical and boring. However, if you twist it clockwise then the balance and symmetry becomes far more interesting (Fig.05).

Step by step

Once the composition was ready, the next step was light and shadow. When I work on an image that has a degree of complexity, I do not add any color until I have at least 60% of the detail done in grayscale (Fig.06). I started this process by masking the buildings' silhouettes and giving them shape and color that was contrasting to

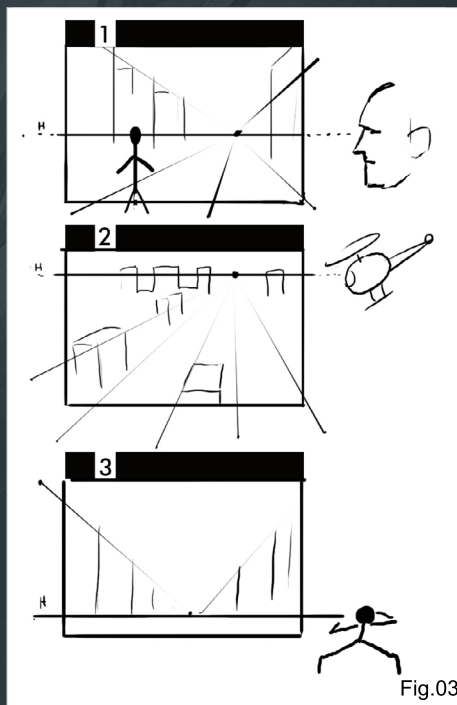


Fig.03

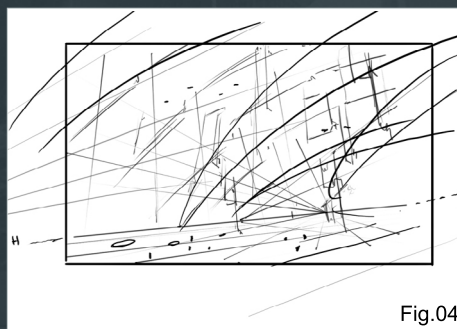


Fig.04

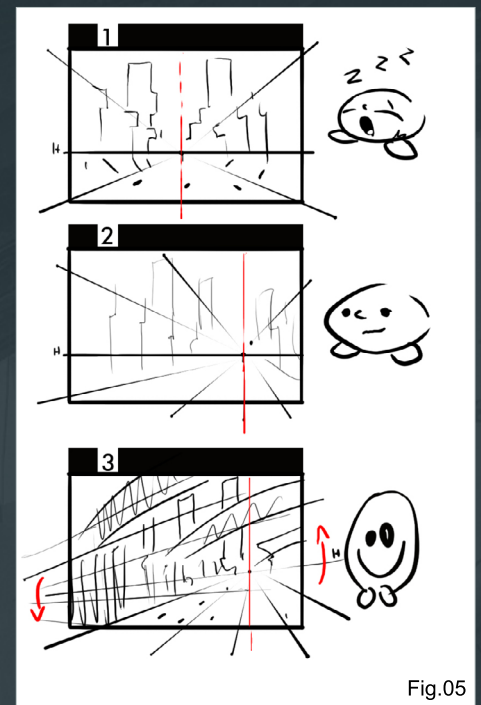


Fig.05

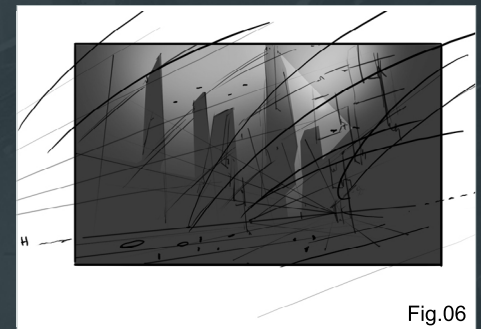


Fig.06

the rest of the image by using much lighter or darker grays (Fig.07). Once the shape of a scene is clear you can give it more detail by starting to add textures (Fig.08).

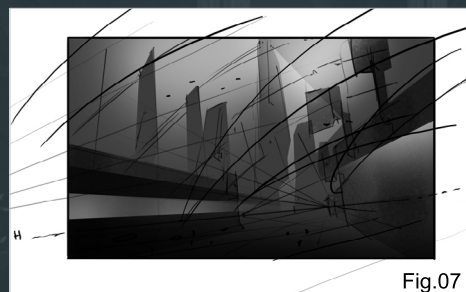


Fig.07

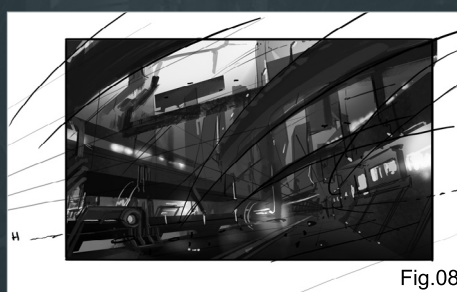


Fig.08

Textures

What I usually do with backgrounds to save time is to draw a texture and repeat it several times using Photoshop tricks. As an example to show you how I do this I have drawn a basic structure in perspective that leaks away to a single point.

Step 1: Draw a texture or design on any surface of the drawing. In this example I have chosen the end of the wall (Fig.9a).

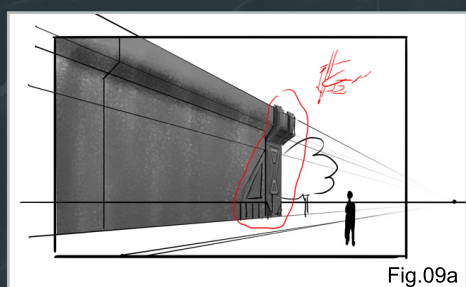


Fig.09a

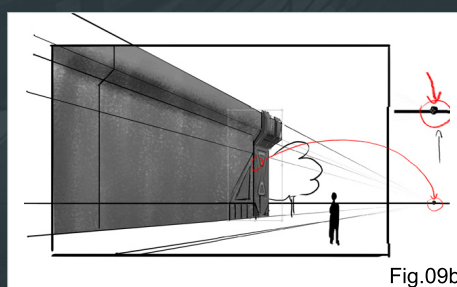


Fig.09b

Step 2: Once the texture is ready, mask it and copy it to a new layer (Ctrl + C and Ctrl + V), then press Ctrl + T. You will see that the selected texture has a frame to allow you to adjust the size of your texture. In the middle of the frame you will find a circle with a cross in the middle of it. Move that to the vanishing point (Fig.09b).

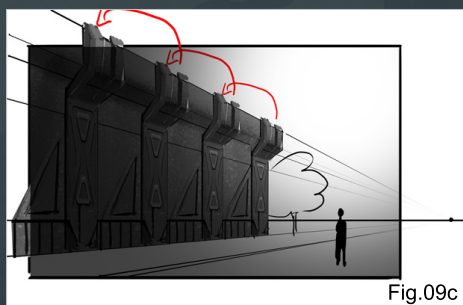


Fig.09c

Step 3: When steps 1 and 2 are done, place the mouse cursor on the left superior angle of the frame that contains the texture, and press Shift + Alt to move the texture to the left, while pressing both mouse buttons. This way we can repeat the same previously drawn texture and transfer it, keeping its perfect form and perspective (Fig.09C).

I've noted the areas where I used this technique with red marks in my drawing (Fig.09d).

Color

To give color to the image I distinguished each element step by step, by using color contrast. Sky on the one hand, the street and



Fig.09d

the buildings on the other. Light is always an important element (Fig.10).

Windows

Here I will show you step-by-step how to get "glowing window" effect by using textures.

Step 1: To get a realistic effect, draw rectangles on each building, using only one color (Fig.11a).

Step 2: Place a texture over this color. It can be taken from any photograph where light can be seen through a window. Then place the photo in the windows area and select the Linear light option from the Layers flap (Fig.11b).

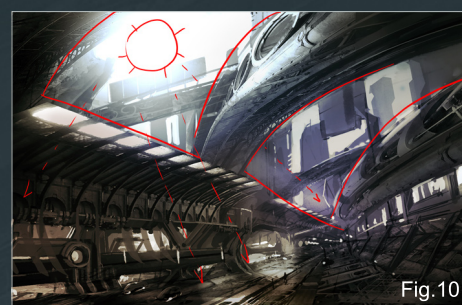


Fig.10

Step 3: To light the window even more, use an almost white yellow color and create a new layer. Paint it with using the Overlay option (Fig.11c).

Posters

Step 1: Draw a poster, or some kind of rectangular, square or circular surface.

Step 2: Texture it with a photograph or something that will attract attention. So that it fits on the image well use the image on Overlay (Fig.12).

Conclusion

When it comes to making work for a client or to sell, knowing how to compose the image and use perspective correctly makes a big difference.

It is very difficult for me to tell you step-by-step how I created the final image. If I had to, I think it would be very tedious for readers, so I did my best to explain the most important steps. The search for ideas, composition and perspective were crucial to create an interesting image. I hope you have liked this tutorial and can benefit from it.

To have good ideas is what really matters.

Ignacio Bazan Lazcano

For more from this artist visit:

<http://www.ignaciobazanart.com/>

Or contact them at:

i.bazanlazcano@gmail.com

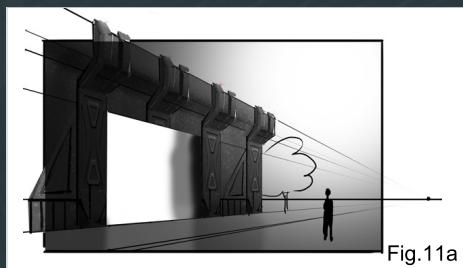


Fig.11a

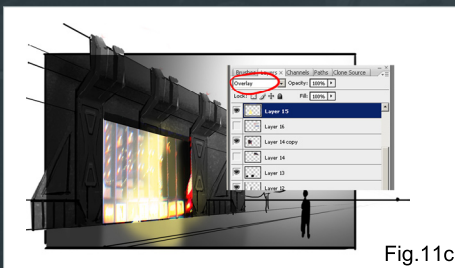


Fig.11c

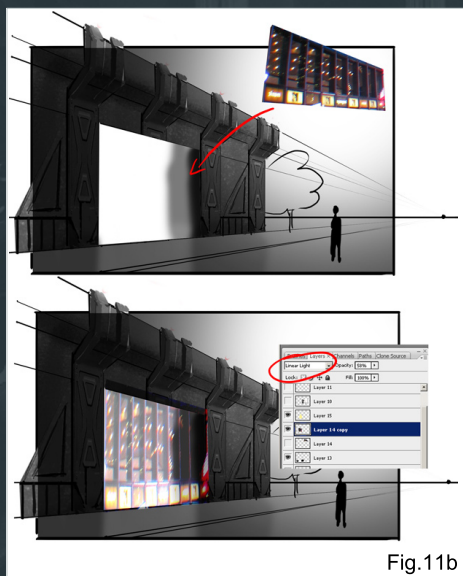


Fig.11b

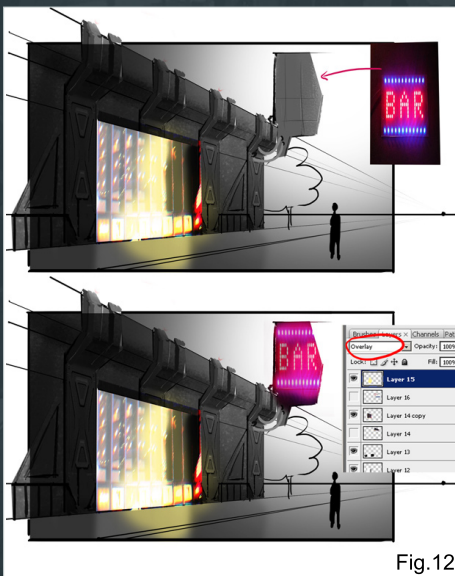


Fig.12







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CUSTOM BRUSHES



Custom brushes are not only a great way to increase the speed at which a painting can be completed, but can also create an effect that would otherwise be impossible. They can be used in many different types of scene, but many would argue that they become most useful when creating a space scene. In space many items need replicating or reproducing in vast quantities, which can be difficult, but custom brushes can make this process much easier and simpler. In this series the artists involved will be showing you how to create brushes to improve your scene and how to use them to the best effect.

Chapter 01: Asteroid Belt | July 2010

Chapter 02: Egyptian Sci-Fi Scene | August 2010

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Fig.01

Custom Brushes For Sci-Fi Chapter 1 - Asteroid Belt, Stars, Star Field, etc.

Software used: Photoshop

Introduction

Hello, everybody. It is nice to have a chance to share my new tutorial with you. This time I am going to talk about creating some custom brushes, but I will also try to give a complete overview and advice as to how to create a space scene.

To be honest, I am not the best space-artist. I have done a few space scenes before, but I do not have a vast amount of experience with the subject. So this image proved to be a challenge for me too.

I changed my direction with this image several times during the creation process, but it was a nice journey through asteroid belts, black holes and lost spaceships. I hope you will enjoy it too!

Concepts and thumbnails

So before I start to draw something, I try to think about the subject. If it is a subject or topic that is new to me I surf the internet to gather as much information about the subject as I can. For this project I looked at tons of artwork created by other artists and pictures from the NASA

website. I also watched some sci-fi movies and slowly my creative batteries started to fill.

Images started to appear in my head and it was time to start drawing something. I still wasn't exactly sure what I wanted to draw, but I knew I wanted to show some kind of asteroid belt around a planet. I also wanted to spice it up with a spaceship flying through the asteroid belt, or a wreckage lost among the asteroids. I have an addiction to creating cinematic scenes, so I wanted to create something that looked like it came from a movie. I started the process by dropping down some rough sketches using the Lasso tool in Photoshop (**Fig.01**).

I am going to take this opportunity to share some videos with you that show my process of sketching with the Lasso tool. If you download the videos and watch the first one it will show my sketching technique. (**Watch Video1 –**

You can download this via the link at the beginning and the end of this tutorial).

At this point I had a spaceship making a speedy turn through the asteroid field. This was a very quick sketch, but it had almost all the information I needed at that moment: mood, composition, colors and the basic design.

This is not a definitive rule, but if my work is not looking good as a thumbnail it doesn't tend to work even if I spend a few days adding and polishing details. With this in mind I generally try to generate several thumbnails to see which direction I should take. Of course many things at this stage are uncertain, but I can use this to my advantage because working in an abstract way gives me a chance to explore more.

So I went back to my idea of a space wreckage and I made this thumbnail (**Fig.02**).

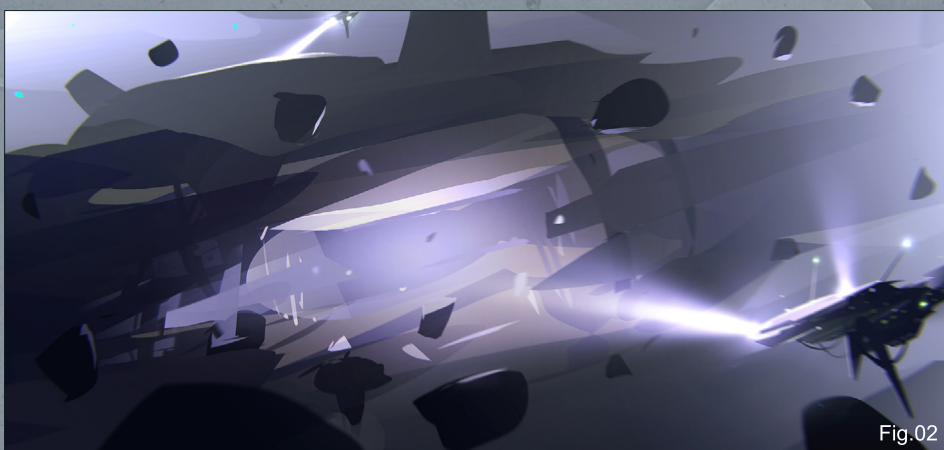


Fig.02

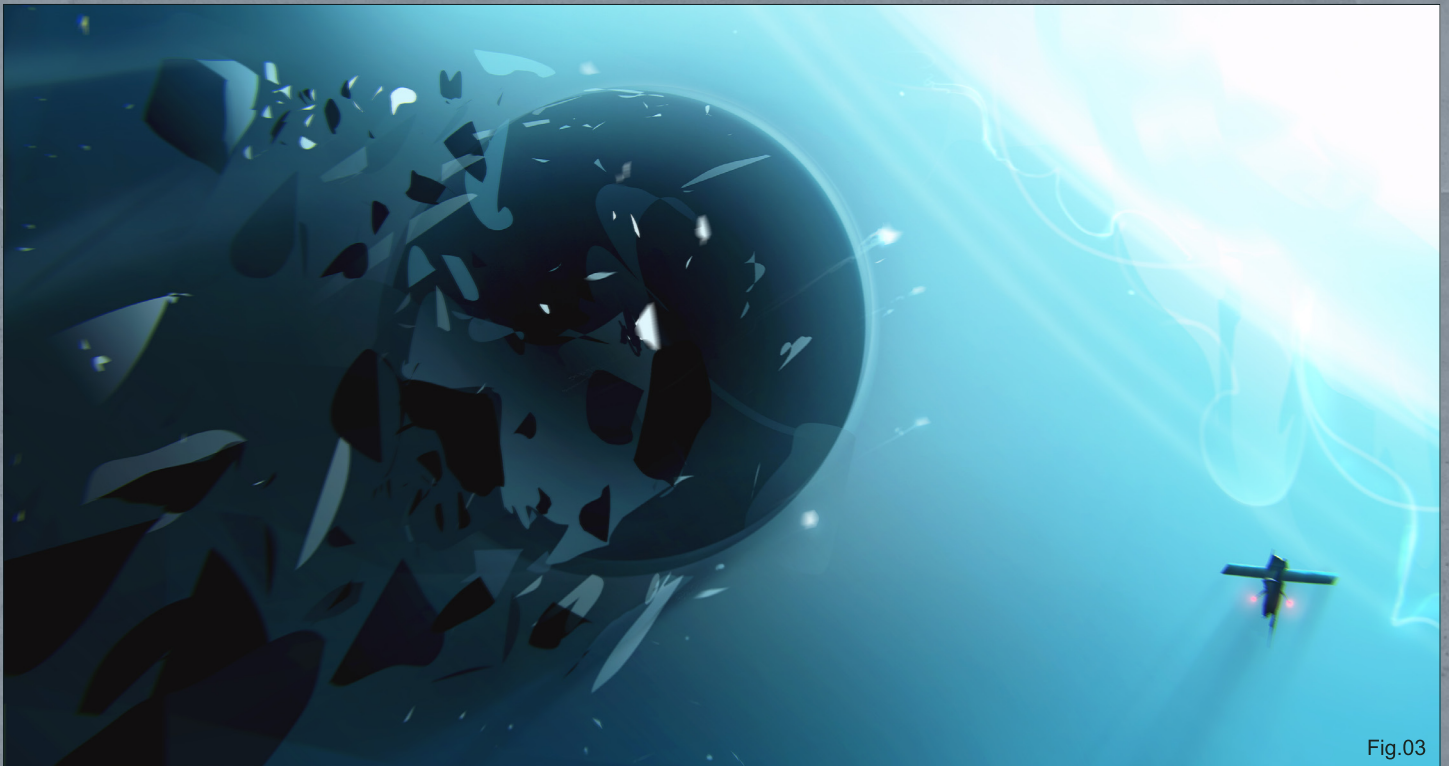


Fig.03

Again, I tried to keep everything quite rough and loose. I continued to experiment and created the following sketches (Fig.03 – 04).

I liked aspects of all of them, but I was still unsure which direction to take. So I continued to experiment. I took all of them and mixed them in Photoshop. I know it sounds a bit weird but I find this process of mixing quite interesting and creative. I am not claiming that I am a pioneer of this method but I do use it a lot in my workflow.

The main idea behind mixing is to use sketches and set them to different layer modes to obtain

something new. Layer modes are a very powerful feature in Photoshop.

I then changed the blending mode of the top layer to obtain an interesting looking composition and shape. I advise you to watch the second video to see how I did it. (**Watch Video 2 – You can download this via the link at the beginning and the end of this tutorial**). After some mixing I ended up with this image (Fig.05). It was still abstract, but at least now I could see the direction I wanted to go. I knew it is going to be a spaceship flying near a giant planet surrounded by asteroids. Also I decided

to use this color palette, so then it was time to focus on the details.

Custom shapes

I started by thinking about the design of the ship. I wanted it to look like a military spaceship, more specifically a military explorer in the deep space. Being an aerospace engineer myself I really love to design flying vehicles, so I decided to create several custom shapes. Yeah, I call them custom shapes, not custom designs. This is because these are not concepts of the final ship, but are only shapes and forms that I am going to mix in to build up my final vehicle.



Fig.04

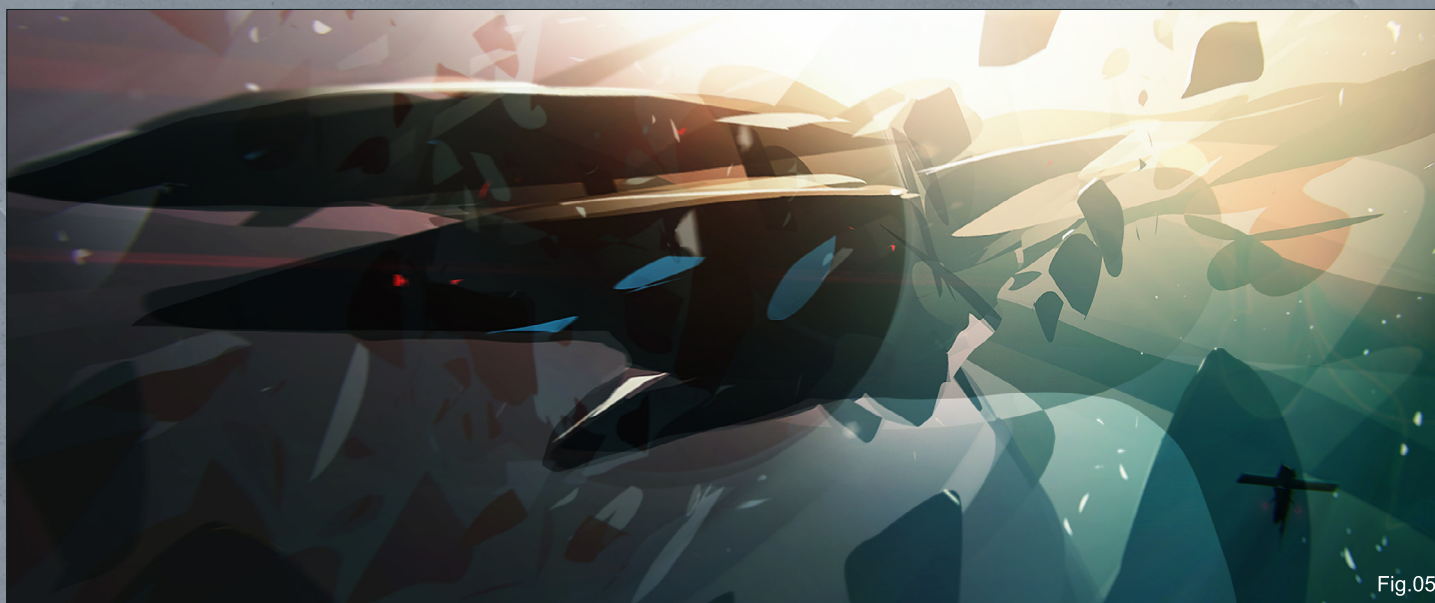


Fig.05

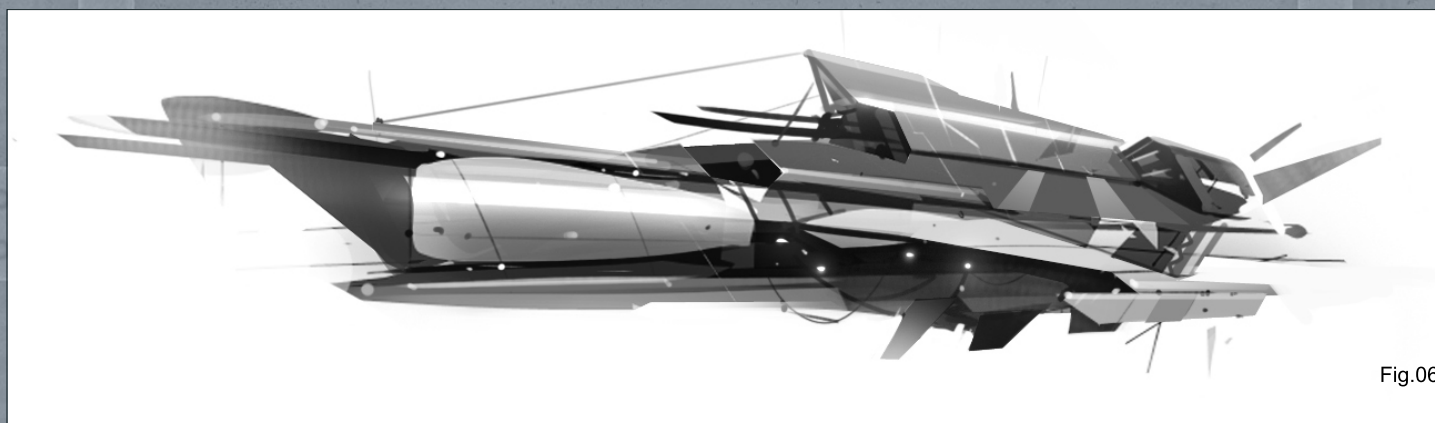


Fig.06

For me the best way to create some random shapes and forms is using Alchemy. Alchemy is a great and very simple piece of software that allows you to create very crazy stuff.

The third video shows how I created my first custom shape (Fig.06) using Alchemy (watch video 3 – **You can download this via the link at the beginning and the end of this tutorial**).

At the beginning I created very random shapes and erased them to create some new ones.

I did this to try to relax my hand, because I wanted it to create something in a loose way that I hadn't ever created before.

After creating some more random shapes (Fig.07), I mixed them using layer modes above my original ship. Also I refined and cleaned up my background. This is the final concept (Fig.08).

At this point the long process of rendering started. I won't explain it in a lot detail, since it is a time consuming process to explain how you paint all of the details that can be seen in final ship design. There is no magical tool or a command that can help you with this process, but just to give you an idea I spent around two days, just on the ship (Fig.09). As a final touch I used some container textures that I downloaded from www.cgtextures.com.

Custom brushes

Finally, it was time to create some cool custom brushes, but before that I started to see that my whole composition was a bit heavy on the left. So I balanced the image by moving the giant red planet to the bottom of the scene (Fig.10). Of course, this changed my whole composition but I was quite satisfied with the result, since it created a lot of space behind the ship. Also I

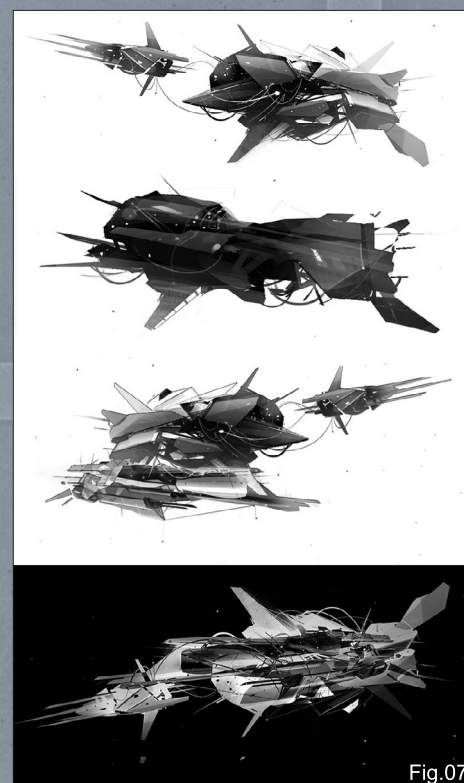


Fig.07



added some atmospheric effects to the planet; to do that I used some pictures of curvy clouds from my own photo library.

For custom asteroid brushes, I again switched to Alchemy (**Fig.11**).

You can see the whole process of creating these brushes in the fourth video (**Watch video**

4 – You can download this via the link at the beginning and the end of this tutorial). A set of these asteroid brushes comes free with this tutorial, so feel free to use them.

Once I had cool asteroids created in Alchemy, I copied them to Photoshop and adjusted the different brush settings for them, including Scatter and Opacity Jitter.

Of course after painting the asteroids with these custom brushes, I did a lot of work on this asteroid shore. I call it a shore, because I wanted these asteroids to look like waves hitting an imaginary shore. And this ship floats above these waves like a normal ship floats on ocean surface. All of the highlights were added manually, but I guess that is the way it goes. Custom brushes really save your time, but there





Fig.10

is still a lot of manual work that has to be done to make them look real and believable (Fig.12).

As a final touch I added some glows and flipped the image (Fig.13).

Post-production

When I had finished with the painting it was time to add some cinematic effects. The first one to mention is the flare effect. To create the flare effect I used an amazing plugin developed by Videocopilot. It is called Optical Flare. It can be used to create very advance and realistic flares. Another thing I use a lot of in my production is Chromatic Aberration. It can be made by using third party plugins for Photoshop, but you can also do it by also using a Lens Distortion filter in Photoshop.

Conclusion

So here is where my space adventure ends. I hope you've enjoyed this tutorial. I tried to share with you some useful and interesting tips that I use in my production. Being a self-taught artist myself, I remember times when I was sitting for hours in front of the computer unable to draw or imagine anything. Working with abstract forms opened my imagination.

Another pill for imagination is inspiration. Grab inspiration everywhere; from books, movies,



Fig.11

music, paintings, life and nature. There are no limitations. The bigger your visual library, the more you can create.

And lastly, use everything that can speed up your process. Custom shapes, custom textures, custom brushes. They really help to create those complex details, but there are still a lot of things that have to be done manually. This is art and every cool piece of art is a result of a big effort, both physically and mentally.

If you have any question about this tutorial or in general don't hesitate to ask me.

Thanks a lot.

Jama Jurabaev

For more from this artist visit:

<http://jamajurabaev.daportfolio.com/>

Or contact them at:

Jama_art@tag.tj



Fig.12



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Fig.13

**“It is not only birth and growth,
but ageing and death that
makes nature so beautiful and
touching, in comparison to the
manmade world.”**

It's a New World

Making of By Vinod More



Vinod More brings us a wonderful juxtaposition of nature and technology in his latest piece, *It's a New World*. Read on to find out just how this beautiful image came to life...

It's a new world

Software used: Photoshop CS3 – WACOM

The idea behind this painting came to me when I was looking at broken hardware in my PC. It's always been there in my mind, how similar they both are: the hardware with all of its circuits, and leaves with their veins. I've always found them similar in terms of shape, look, color and function, but totally contrasting at the same time as natural and man-made elements. It was then, looking at that piece of hardware that I thought of working on this concept.

I was pretty clear about what I was thinking of, but somehow I was not getting it right on the canvas. I spent 6-10 days working on this image, but it didn't seem right. Finally I left the painting. But the concept was always popping back into my mind (**Fig.01**).

After a few months I came back to the idea again and made a rough color sketch that seemed to click with me; it was just what I was looking for. After spending time thinking about the elements and composition I started gathering raw materials (**Fig.02**).

I browsed for references like computer garbage, plugs, pins, keyboards, leaves, plants, forests, creepers and everything that I found useful.



Fig.01



Fig.02

After collecting 30-40 reference images I sorted those I thought would be most useful. My idea was that I would mostly use ready-made stuff like keyboard, cables, plants and leaves. I was not willing to spend time painting them. But as soon as I started putting them in, somehow it was not clicking with my idea. I wanted every single element to be placed as in my thoughts and that was not possible with photographs.

So I painted the keyboard so I could place it in the image and develop it further. Then I studied

the flow of the circuits on one of the scraps of hardware that I had found on the roadside the day before. And then I designed the basic high resolution circuitry, keeping a leaf as reference to follow the shape and flow of veins. At this point my most laborious task was over. Now I had to get more creative with placement, lighting and rendering (**Fig.03**).

I started painting things, while always focusing on the final piece. I worked on depth of field and placed supporting elements like the monitor and

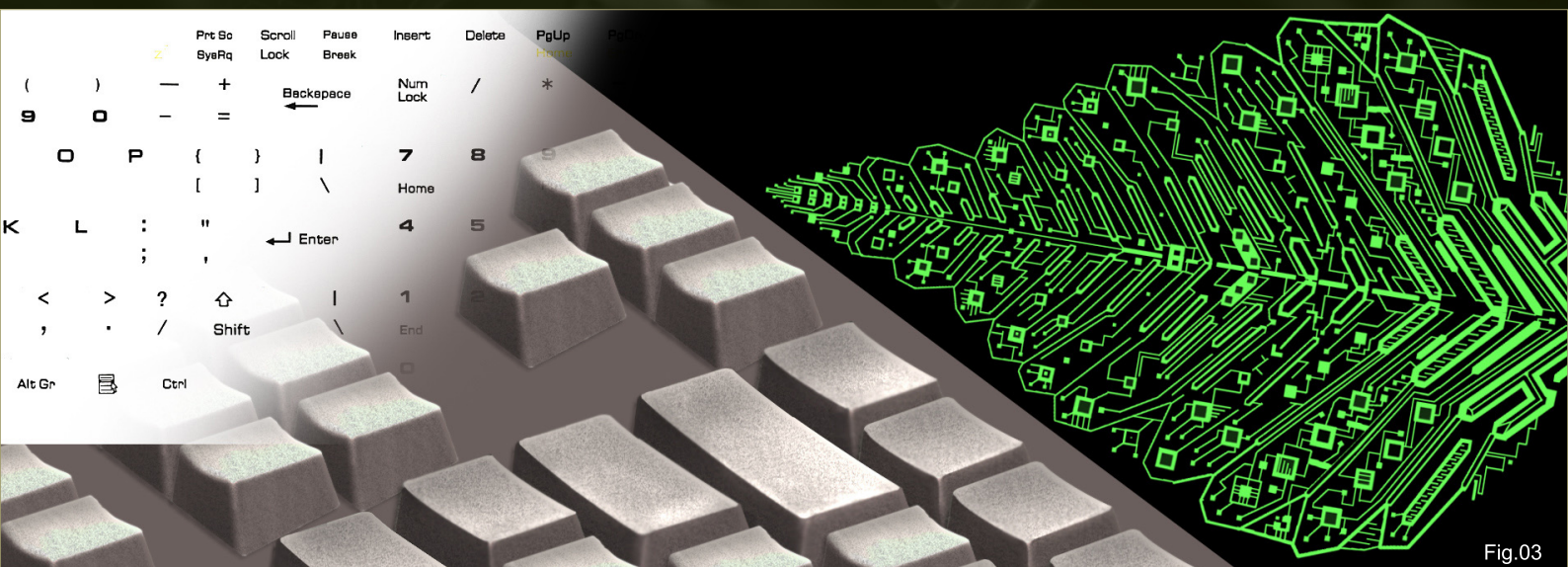


Fig.03



Fig.04



Fig.05

creepers with the plugs and pins connecting them. By this time my vision for the final piece was very clear. I wanted nothing to be standing out apart from the small plant. But at the same time I wanted all the other elements to work well, supporting the overall image. This took me a really long time; finding the right place and focus for every single object was difficult. For example I must have moved the monitor 20 times before choosing its final position (Fig.04).

When I was happy with the placement of all the parts, I painted all the elements again with more detail, like the wires and leaves. At this point I was pretty much happy with the background, color, light and composition. Next I moved to my main focal point: the plant. I went in to as much details as I could to get the look that I was trying to achieve so I dressed up the surrounding elements accordingly. I used lots of Burn and Dodge to achieve a fresh, juicy, tender feel. At the same time though I had an idea, and I added a fallen dry leaf. To do this I used the existing leaf, adjusted it and then I was almost done with image. It was eight o'clock in morning and I



Fig.06

had been working the whole night. After tea I had another fresh look at it and asked a few friends to comment on it. The result of that was that they liked the piece, but I got a confused reaction to the dry leaf (Fig.05).

Without wasting time I removed that leaf and gave the image another try. I placed everything in the background and concentrated on the creeper where I wanted to add the new leaves. Separating the creeper cables from the entire picture helped me to focus. I started working on the maple leaf, moved it around and tweaked it to avoid it looking like a stamp. Then I worked on the leaf close up and blurred it to make it fit into the image (Fig.06).

It is not only birth and growth, but ageing and death that makes nature so beautiful and touching, in comparison to the man-made world. I was very happy to add this last thought to the painting; without which this piece would have been incomplete. Mostly I paint with loose strokes and do concept art, but this was totally different and required heavy detailing; it's really important to execute your concept with the required level of detailing (Fig.07)

Vinod More

For more from this artist visit:
<http://vindowart.blogspot.com/>
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Fig.07



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This month we feature:

"Barbarian Chick"
by Maciej Kuciara





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BARBARIAN CHICK

BY MACIEJ KUCIARA

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop



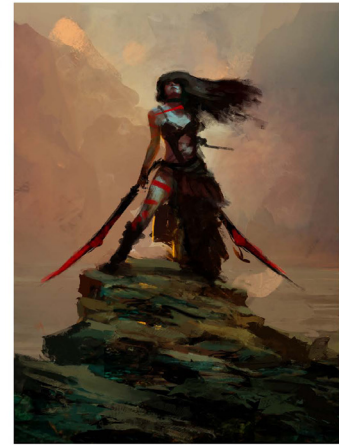
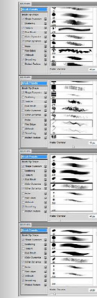
IDEA

The hardest thing in concept art and illustration production I find is getting an appealing idea that will sell the image. It doesn't matter if I'm creating a picture just for fun or for production purposes; I try to keep the workflow the same in both cases.

For this Barbarian Chick picture, I got some serious inspiration from both fantasy computer games as well as Frank Frazetta's masterpieces. The idea with this piece was pretty simple: create a hero type, a cool character that any potential gamer (if that piece would end up as conceptual image for game assets) could relate to. I thought confronting the fragility of beauty and barbaric gore would fulfill the idea perfectly! The major challenge I found with this image was to mix a painterly style with realistic rendering, but surprisingly it went pretty smoothly.

COMPOSITION

The first thing I do to settle my ideas down is to throw in some colors and create a composition that I might



be happy with. This step is really important for me, as it defines all the tools and requirements I will have to handle in order to create final image.

I started roughly with shapes and colors (Fig.01) to define the composition, mood and brief idea that was hiding behind the artwork. I used a lot of different custom brushes and parts of old pictures that I had made before. The reason for this was to shorten the painting time and to find out if the idea that I had in my mind was really working. I personally think that figuring out if your ideas will work as you wish them to in a final image is something that will either make the painting process easy or painful. There are times when I do dozens of 5-10 minute doodles, or even very dirty and ugly photo collages, to prove to myself I'm doing something that will kick ass. In the Barbarian Chick image, there was just the one sketch for this piece, since the image itself wasn't really complicated in terms of the composition and idea. Beautiful barbarian girl + swords + blood = awesome!

Fig.01

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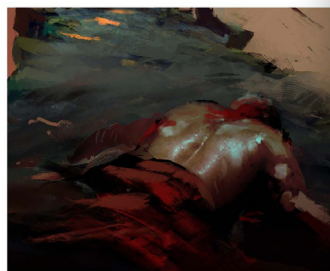
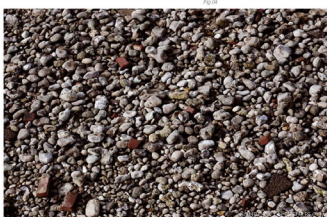
The following shots of the "Barbarian Chick" book pages are featured here in full-resolution and can be read by zooming in...

COLORS

With every image I work on I try to ensure that I keep the color palette consistent from beginning to end. There is nothing more frustrating than refactoring an entire image with different color warmth when you're not happy with how the image looks. As I mentioned before, I always start with colorful doodles to convince and commit myself to the idea that I decide to work on. With Barbarian Chick I wanted to go with warm bloody colors with a complementary blue tint for the background and highlights. I can't count how many images I've scrapped and never got back to, just because the initial idea wasn't really well thought-out. Thankfully, Barbarian Chick was one of those strong ideas I found really easy to follow.

DETAILS

Once the idea is there, I start to examine the image briefly and try to figure out what kind of materials I will have to use to get all the details I want to achieve in the final image. For this particular image I knew I would need to work with realistic looking materials, such as fur, skin and armor. From that point of view, I always go through all the pictures I've created so far, as well as my custom brushes and textures (Fig.02). If I can't find a material there that I need, I either try to make it or use a good reference texture or image that will just make my life



easier. I avoid detailing things pixel by pixel at all costs, as it just takes too much time and kills productivity.

During the detail stage I also look at the bigger picture of the piece I'm working on. I try to figure out if there are any elements missing, or if adding something to the image will make it better or not. At this stage adding a dead body lying at the bottom of the composition was a nice addition to the beauty-gore mix (Fig.03).

On Barbarian Chick herself, I used three reference images: fur (Fig.04), for defining the brush pattern and color ranges for the chick's skin and fur elements; leather armor (Fig.05 - 06), from which I cloned the leather pattern for the corset and straps; and pebbles (Fig.07), using a photo texture from cgtextures.com to detail out

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Fig.03

the rock parts of the picture. The rest of the material I covered with brushes and texture layouts that I had used in other images created beforehand.

The only really difficult part of the main character was keeping her face realistic, as for the body, I made enough clothing shortcuts to get away with body proportions and anatomy. This is where the "gore" mix came in handy, since using cheap red body paint and blood splashes covered a lot of details that I didn't have to worry about, as well as brought in the idea that I wanted to achieve for this picture.

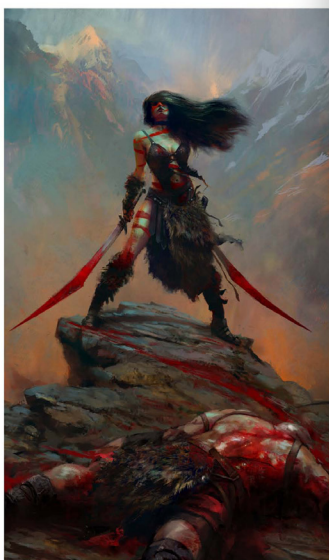
MORE GORE AND DETAILS

Once most details were in place, I noticed the picture was still missing some gore, or at least it wasn't quite "there yet", for me. The easiest way to gore-it-out was to add some blood splashes here and there. Since I didn't want to make it too random, but rather sit nicely in place and enhance the core idea for this picture, I decided to add a nasty blood splash, a sort of path connection, between the beautiful killer and her victim (Fig.08 - 09).

Once I was happy with it, I used custom brushes on the topmost layer with lower opacities, to connect all the pieces nicely together and to enhance the painterly look of the image (Fig.10). Blending sharper parts together is something that I use in my images quite often, since it's a



Fig.10



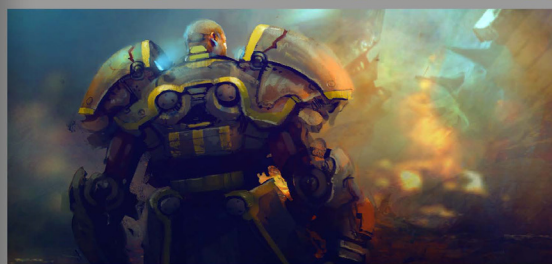
very cheap way to make an image more consistent, especially if you go with shortcuts, such as textures and photographic elements in your images.

CONCLUSION

There are those images that you finish off and you're happy with, and then there are others that you find working just "OK", but you still end up with mixed feelings, like you could have done better. *Barbarian Chick* was one of those images I found myself really happy with in the end, not just because I accomplished the goal I set up for myself, but also because at some point this picture became a good learning process. I've made my work library bigger with a few new custom brushes and some more painting experience, which is always good!

CHARACTERS

ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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CHARACTERS

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